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Ethnology of Easter Island

By Alfred Métraux
Bernice P. Bishop Museum Fellow, 1936-37

INTRODUCTION

Most of the material published in this monograph is the result of field work that I carried out as a member of the Franco-Belgian Expedition to Easter Island (1934-1935). First plans for this Expedition were conceived by the Institut d'Ethnologie de l'Université de Paris and by the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle in Paris. The Belgian Government and scientific institutions gave their support to this enterprise which became a joint undertaking by the two countries. The Expedition was originally composed of Mr. Charles-Louis Watelin, French archaeologist, Dr. Henri Lavachery, Conservatuer aux Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire, Dr. Israel Drapkin, Chilean physician, and me. Mr. Watelin died at sea in the Patagonian channels on the way to Easter Island.

The French Navy transported the members of the Expedition to Easter Island aboard the man-of-war *Rigault-de-Genouilly* which was then making a cruise from France to Indo-China. We returned to France aboard the Belgian training ship *Mercator*. The writing of this volume was made possible through a Bishop Museum Fellowship that enabled me to come to Honolulu and to work up my material at Bishop Museum.

Conditions for anthropological research on Easter Island are especially distressing. I know of few places in the Pacific where so little remains of the ancient culture. The rare traditions that linger in the memory of a small group of natives have been recorded over and over again by visitors to the island. The present population of 456 natives is entirely derived from the 111 natives left after the abandonment of the island by the French missionaries in 1872. This single fact shows how little chance exists for the preservation of old traditions. Viriamo, the mother of my informant Tepano, is the only living person who witnessed the functioning of the ancient culture. As she is over 100 years old and her memory is uncertain, she was of little help in my inquiries.

My chief informant was Juan Tepano who, although about 60 years of age, is the oldest man on the island. He speaks fluent Spanish, having spent seven years in Chile. He was Mrs. Routledge's interpreter and has retained from that contact a keen interest in the past. He is intelligent, quick, and proud of his reputation as the *maori* in the old folklore. When other natives are asked about their ancestors they always refer to Juan Tepano. The information that I received from others was generally attributed to him. If Tepano reads these

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[pp. 1 & 2 have no textual material]

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lines I hope that he finds here the expression of my gratitude for the enthusiasm with which he imparted to me the sum of his knowledge. In collaborating so completely, he showed much generosity since he was convinced that any bit of information about the past of Easter Island was worth a fortune.

I owe much to Victoria Rapahango, one of the last descendants of the king's family, who checked all my notes and helped me in the reconstruction of ancient techniques. She is perhaps the last person who perpetuates on Easter Island the traditions of nobility and culture of the old Polynesian aristocracy.

The archaeological investigation of the island was undertaken by Dr. Lavachery, who will publish separately the results of his survey of the north coast. Our joint work was carried on in a spirit of harmony that is one of my most pleasant memories of the Expedition. Dr. Drapkin, who was delegated by the Chilean Government to study the problem of leprosy on the island, willingly collaborated with us. He made most of the natural history collections for the Muséum d'histoire naturelle in Paris, studied the demography and the blood groups of the natives, and generously gave medical assistance to the natives.

Throughout my stay, from July 1934 to the beginning of January 1935, I tried to live with the natives as intimately as possible. I doubt that a longer visit would have added much to my material. However, I regret that I did not have sufficient time to study the acculturation problems, which I hope will be the aim of a future expedition. Likewise the time was too short to complete a detailed survey of the archaeology of the island. It would be desirable for a group of trained archaeologists to devote an entire year to making plans of the innumerable ruins scattered throughout the island. No new information could be expected from such a survey, but the ruins are unprotected and constantly threatened with destruction by the natives or careless visitors.

The published literature on Easter Island is considerable. Most of it has been listed in the excellent catalog of Father Martin Gusinde. I have consulted all the publications mentioned in it and others that have appeared since 1922. I am convinced that no important source has escaped my attention and that the reader will find in this book all the available documentation on the island.

A few days after we left Easter Island, it was visited by the Templeton Crocker Expedition. Dr. H. L. Shapiro, Anthropologist of the American Museum of Natural History and a member of that Expedition, studied the physical anthropology of the modern population, and has contributed to this book a chapter on the racial composition of the islanders.

All the legends and traditions that I collected were recorded in the Easter Island language. For reasons of economy, only a few examples of native text are published here. The original manuscripts are filed in the Library of Bishop Museum where they are available to students of Polynesian linguistics. These texts are accompanied by vocabularies and by additional chants.

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THE PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE EASTER ISLANDERS

by

H. L. SHAPIRO

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The attempts to assign the Easter Islanders to their proper place in the racial hierarchy of Oceania fall into two stages. In the first place, both in simplicity of method and in time, come the unscientific but often acute observations of those early explorers of the Pacific who not only visited Easter Island but pondered the question of race sufficiently to record an opinion. These were subjective judgments, based on a rather wide first-hand experience with Polynesians and Melanesians. Following these first generalizations a number of craniological studies have been made, attempting to solve the same problem, but with the aid of measurements and analyses. But whereas the earlier subjective impressions form a unanimous corpus of opinion, the later, more detailed investigations have rendered the problem more obscure than it was in the beginning.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the classification and relationship of the Oceanic populations received considerable attention, largely stimulated, no doubt, by interest in the taxonomic work of Linné, Buffon and others. It was held that two principal races or stocks inhabited the island world of the Pacific: J. R. Forster (Observations made during a voyage round the world, 1778), who accompanied Cook as a naturalist, in summarizing his own views on this subject expressed those prevailing among contemporary explorers:

> We chiefly observed two great varieties of people in the South Seas; the one more fair, well limbed, athletic, of a fine size, and a kind benevolent temper; the other blacker, the hair just beginning to become woolly and crisp, the body more slender and low, and their temper, if possible more brisk, though somewhat mistrustful. The first race inhabits O-Taheitee, and the Society Isles, the Marquesas, the Friendly Isles, Easter-Island, and New Zealand. The second race peoples New-Caledonia, Tanna, and the New Hebrides, especially Mallicollo.

To fit the Easter Islanders into this dichotomous classification offered no difficulty. They, like other Polynesians, were of relatively light hue, had straight or wavy hair, and somewhat resembled Europeans. From these physical similarities the early explorers drew the logical conclusion that the Easter Islanders formed a part of the Polynesian group. Cook (Voyage towards the South Pole and round the world, 1777) observes: "In colour, features, and language, they [Easter Islanders] bear such affinity to the people of the more western isles, that no one will doubt that they have had the same origin." In this opinion La Pérouse concurred (Voyage round the world, 1799).

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This eminently reasonable deduction has satisfied the layman familiar with Oceanic groups. The anthropological world, however, misled by inadequate data and by complex but erroneous statistical manipulations, has for many years entertained the hypothesis that the Easter Islanders form a racial complex created by successive migrations of Melanesians and Polynesians. De Quatrefages and Hamy (Les cranes des races humaines, 1882) were among the first to suggest Melanesian resemblances among the Easter Islanders: "La population actuelle [Easter Islanders] dont nous avons étudié les caractères anatomiques sur 70 pièces rapportées par M. Pinart est absolument semblable à celle des Touamotus, mais plusieurs crânes, d'aspect plus ancien, recuellis par ce voyageur, se rapprochent considérablement de ceux des Papouas." De Quatrefages and Hamy neither amplify this statement nor record the evidence for their recognition of Melanesian traits in these "several" skulls.

The question of Easter Island origins, from a physical anthropological point of view, remained in abeyance until 1895 when Volz's study of Easter Island crania appeared (Archiv. f. Anthrop., vol. 23, pp. 97-169, 1895). Volz concluded that the Easter Islanders represented a racial amalgam of several successive migrations. By statistical procedure he claimed to be able to isolate the various racial elements which had combined to produce the Easter Island population. Numerically, the chief strain was Melanesian, both an east and a west variety; next in concentration were the Polynesians; and finally certain skulls were designated as Australian.

As Meyer and Jablonowski ably pointed out in 1900 (Abhl. u. Ber. d. K. Zool. u. Anthrop.—Ethnogr. Mus., Dresden, vol. 9, no. 4), Volz's method was arbitrary and based on misconceptions of elementary statistical facts. Volz apparently misunderstood the significance of the normal distribution. He based his types inadequately on the length-breadth and breadth-height indices, both of which showed a high correlation with each other, and with no statistical justification he divided the field of frequencies to suit his needs. Moreover, the data were presented in a fashion which does not allow of their rechecking. The reexamination by Meyer and Jablonowski of 24 of Volz's 49 Easter Island crania led them to a complete denial of the validity of the Volzian analysis. The paucity of their data, however, prevented them from attempting to solve the problem of Easter Island origins and affinities.

The Volzian hypothesis reappeared in slightly different guise in 1923 when R. B. Dixon published "The Racial History of Man." Dixon on the basis of the length-breadth, length-height, and nasal indices analyzed the available published data and concluded that Easter Island was settled first by a proto-negroid people identified with "Melanesian". This strain contained not only "protonegroid" but also a proto-Australoid element and a "dash of Caspian." These people are represented as tall and black, with

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woolly or frizzly hair. Following them came the "Caspian" migration of lighter-skinned, straighter-haired folk. From the mingling of these two layers of population, the Easter Islanders were derived. Dixon calculated that 55 percent of the total population was proto-negroid, with Caspian, proto-Australoid, and palae-Alpine in nearly equal proportions. Dixon's system, although a monument of industry, fails to satisfy the requirements of a successful classification since it is based upon an unrealistic conception of human biology and taxonomy. Such significant factors as variation, selection and inbreeding receive scant, if any, consideration in his rather rigid and mechanical system. And the underlying genetic assumptions exceed the limits of precise knowledge.

In Dixon's analysis of the Easter Island population there is no direct evidence which impells us to accept two migrations, even assuming the validity of his method of type analysis. Within Polynesia populations might easily vary from archipelago to archipelago depending on the effects of chance selection, accidents of breeding and isolation, particularly in small groups. The resulting differentiation need not be accounted for by successive migrations.

The most recent[2] study of the Easter Islanders is that published by Von Bonin in 1931 (Biometrika, vol. 23, pts. 3-4). He pooled the collection of crania obtained by the Routledges and now housed in the Hunterian Museum with series from the Ethnographical Museum in Leiden, from the British Museum (Natural History), and from Volz's collection. The variability of this combined series proved to be comparable with three standard series used in the Biometric Laboratory of the University of London. By means of the coefficient of racial likeness the pooled Easter Island skulls were then compared with a number of fringe racial groups including the Maori and the Moriori but no especial affinity was discovered with any of them. Von Bonin concluded that the Easter Island skulls revealed no statistical evidence of marked heterogeneity, although in several respects they showed specialization. In a note to Von Bonin's paper, G. M. Morant suggests, on the basis of additional coefficient of racial likeness comparisons, that the Easter Island skulls display a resemblance to Loyalty Islands crania.

Finally, we may refer briefly to statements by Sir Arthur Keith and Capt. T. A. Joyce. Neither has published, to my knowledge, any extensive study of Easter Island crania, but Keith has examined the Routledge collection and Joyce, the Crawford collection. Keith says, "The Polynesian type is fairly purely represented in some of the Easter Islanders, but they are absolutely and relatively a remarkably long-headed people, and in this feature they approach the Melanesian more than the Polynesian type" (C. S. Rout-

[2] Since writing this, I have seen a reference to a craniological study of Oceanic races by K. Wagner, which I have been unable to consult.

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ledge, Mystery of Easter Island, p. 295). Commenting upon Mrs. Routledge's address before the Royal Geographic Society, Joyce remarks, "I could not get away from the conclusion that in their measurements and general appearance these skulls were far more Melanesian than Polynesian" (Roy. Geogr. Soc., Jour., May 1917).

Thus, this brief resumé of the craniological investigations of Easter Island racial affinities fails to uncover any unanimity of opinion. In general, however, these studies fall into two schools. One, although recognizing a Polynesian connection, seeks to tie up the Easter Islanders with Melanesians or Australians; the other denies the validity of the evidence of a relationship with non-Polynesian groups but fails to confirm their Polynesian origin. But none offers the solution, which occurred long ago to the untutored explorers, that the Easter Islanders are Polynesians.

The evidence from the living Easter Islanders, which has thus far escaped discussion, seems to me especially decisive in supporting the reasonableness of the Polynesian origin of the Easter Islanders. The data from the living population are at present far more significant than those from skulls because comparable data already exist for many Polynesian island groups, whereas cranial information on Polynesians is entirely inadequate and often misleading. In fact, I believe that part of the confusion which has arisen from the craniological studies of the Easter Islanders may be attributed to inadequate information on the cranial characteristics of Polynesians. During a recent visit to Easter Island I gathered a series of anthropometric measurements on 22 Easter Island adult males who were rigidly selected out of a total population of 456 for their purity of descent. Everyone suspected of mixture with foreigners was excluded from the series. These measurements, after making necessary allowances for the differences between living and skeletal material, not only agree with the cranial measurements, but also indicate that the Easter Islanders are definitely Polynesians of a somewhat specialized and exaggerated type isolated by migration and intensified by inbreeding.

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142 144 These distributions fall within Polynesian limits; in fact, the Easter Islanders appear to be fairer than many characteristically Polynesian groups:

	Unexposed Skin Color		Exposed Skin Color	
	Range	Mode	Range	Mode
Easter Island	11-22	14	16-25	21
Mangareva	11-17	14 and 17	14-25	16 and 22
Tuamotus	10-24	17	15-25	22
Society Islands	10-22	16	14-24	16
Marquesas	12-22	14	14-22	16

Similarly the hair form of the Easter Islanders shows no evidence of Melanesian influence; indeed, the following figures reveal that the Easter Islanders have a higher percentage of straight hair than is generally true of other eastern Polynesian groups.

	Hair Form				
	Straight	Low Waves	Deep Waves	Curly	Frizzly
Easter Island	54.55%	4.55%	22.73%	18.18%	
Mangareva	47.62	19.05	9.52	23.81	
Tuamotus	32.14	31.63	23.47	10.71	2.04%
Society Islands	26.98	26.98	26.98	19.05	
Marquesas	21.69	26.51	28.92	22.89	

Similarly, in other traits which Melanesian admixture might be expected to modify, such as relative width of the nose, facial projection and thickness of lip, the distributions among the Easter Islanders offer no support for the Melanesian hypothesis.

Finally I should like to add that blood groupings, as yet unpublished, which were determined for the Easter Islanders not only corroborate the purity of our series but also confirm its relationship with Polynesia rather than Melanesia. Groups B and AB are lacking, thus agreeing with the Mangarevans and Tuamotuans.

The anthropometric evidence which I have been able to gather points unequivocally to the Polynesian origin of the Easter Islanders. The closest approximation appears to be with Mangareva, although there is some reason to believe that the Easter Islanders form part of an early, marginal population whose influence may still be seen in the physical traits of the Maori, the Marquesans, some Tuamotuans, as well as the Mangarevans.

LANGUAGE

197 114 Easter Islanders were recognized as Polynesians almost as soon as they boarded Cook's ship. The few words they uttered made it clear that their language was closely related to Tahitian. The lists of words recorded by Cook (53, vol. 2, p. 364) and by J. R. Forster (84, p. 284) entirely confirm this first impression, and there has never been any doubt that the Easter Island language belongs entirely to the Polynesian group. Some of the Easter

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Island words published by Cook are transcribed as their Tahitian equivalents, and the differences between the two dialects have been disregarded. Forster's vocabulary is more accurate. Four years before Cook, one of Gonzalez's lieutenants collected 98 words (188, pp. 23-33), most of which can be identified easily. However, the ten first numerals have no equivalent in the modern or any other Polynesian dialect. They probably have a meaning entirely different from that assumed by the recorder of the vocabulary and cannot be considered the remnant of another language (189; 154).

An extensive dictionary (191) was compiled by Father Roussel during the years he spent on Easter Island and published after his death by Father Alazard. Though many errors resulted from lack of the author's revision, his vocabulary in general is accurate and complete. I checked it with several natives and found only a small percentage of mistakes. The most serious criticism to be made of this dictionary is that it includes words and expressions entirely foreign to the native mentality. The original meanings of the words have been distorted and new combinations coined. Extensive linguistic material was obtained by Jaussen when he wrote, under Metoro's dictation, the texts of the tablets. (See 112 and 105.)

A short vocabulary of Easter Island was taken by Geiseler (87, pp. 45-46), probably with the help of Salmon. In this list the length of the vowels and the accentuation are carefully indicated. Thomson's texts and vocabulary (215, pp. 546-552), probably recorded for him by Salmon, form one of the most valuable contributions to the island's linguistics. Unfortunately this material has been disfigured in the copy and printed with so many typographical errors that its value is greatly impaired. With the help of intelligent natives I tried to restore these texts to their original form, but with only partial success. A manuscript by Alexander de Witt, stored in the Bishop Museum library, contains some of Thomson's texts and his vocabulary, copied from the original papers. Here the spellings are more accurate than those in the printed version. Cooke's (54) list of words, received from Salmon, is fairly correct in its spelling.

Mrs. Routledge has probably transcribed native texts but they have not yet been published. Martinez (151) and Bienvenido de Estella (80, pp. 74-132) have both published extensive vocabularies in Chile, but both teem with errors. Some short native songs were included in an article by Knoche (118), but again the phonetics is poor and the understanding of the language deficient. A Chilean officer, Vives Solar (223), has published a textbook in the native language for Easter Island children. He has tried to adapt Chilean elementary school books for this purpose, and his translations do not give a true idea of the language as used by the natives.

The native language as it is spoken today is found in folklore texts recorded by our expedition. The phonetics is extremely simple; there is no

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the men. Roggeveen, however, states that only two or three old women were seen.

From scant information given in Roggeveen's log (186) it is apparent that the ships anchored on the north coast, probably at La Pérouse. Fearing for the security of his vessels when a northerly wind blew up and convinced that Easter Island was not the land of Davis, Roggeveen made no attempt at a more thorough exploration of the island and sailed forth on the tenth of April.

The experiences of all later visitors in their dealings with natives were very much the same as that of Roggeveen at this first contact. Despite the nearly complete change of their culture, the natives of today react no differently to the arrival of a foreign ship. They evince the same curiosity, they are gripped by the same excitement, and the same noisy crowd awaits the landing boats. The women are no less generous with their persons, and the men no less prone to petty thievery if opportunity comes their way.

The main sources for the events which accompanied the discovery of Easter Island are Roggeveen's log book (186) and the narrative of Carl Friederich Behrens (18). Roggeveen's account is precise and accurate in details; Behrens' famous description of Easter Island is one of the most fanciful and misleading documents we have.

In a new effort to reach the land of Davis, a Spanish expedition, under the command of Felipe Gonzalez y Haedo, rediscovered Easter Island in 1770. The two Spanish ships were anchored outside the cove of La Pérouse (Hanga-o-honu), but disembarkation was made on the beach of Ovahe. In order to chart the island which Gonzalez believed he was the first to discover, a boat was sent around the island which returned the following day after having stopped for the night near Vinapu on the south coast. A party was then landed to reconnoiter the interior and distract the natives, while another group ascended the slope of Poike with three crosses to be planted on the tops of the three parasitic cones on the side of Puakatiki, thus solemnly taking possession of the island in the name of Spain. Natives, invited to sign the act of possession, made marks on the lower part of the document and by so doing became Spanish subjects. Relations with the natives were cordial. The crews had been given strict orders not to molest them, and exchanges went on quite satisfactorily, although the Spaniards noticed the thievery of the natives and were bothered by their begging. The women invited the visitors to have sexual intercourse with them, and the island men were often the intermediaries in these affairs. The Spaniards seem to have disembarked infrequently, and the exploration of the interior of the island was neglected. The Spanish ships left after six days.

Captain Cook visited Easter Island during his second voyage to the South Seas (1772-1775). He stopped for three days in the bay of Hanga-roa, now

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appeared the most eager to render us a thousand services, was, in reality, ever the most to be suspected."

Following Cook's example, La Pérouse sent an expedition to explore the interior of the island. This party, led by M. de Langle, covered almost the same route as that of the English, and very few new data were recorded. The reconnaissance of the south coast was not carried farther than Ovahe. On the way back the party ascended the Rano-kao, and one of the members even descended into the crater, where he examined the lake and the fringe of vegetation around its edge.

The visit of La Pérouse marks the first attempt of white men to modify native culture by introducing new plants and domestic animals. The gardener of the expedition planted in appropriate soil cabbages, carrots, beets, corn, gourds, oranges, lemons, and cotton (130, vol. 1, p. 90). A couple of goats, sheep, and pigs were presented to the natives. The islanders seem to have received no particular benefit from these gifts, and none of the animals or plants is mentioned by subsequent voyagers. Sixty years later, the same food sources were reintroduced by the missionaries. Brown (27, p. 64) claims to have heard a tradition which alluded to the pigs left by the French navigator. They were supposedly kept in a hole, fed on bananas and sweet potatoes, and finally eaten together with their litter. I found no evidence that the pigs referred to in the tradition were the hog and sow given by La Pérouse. They were designated to me as animals put on the island by a boat of more recent times.

The La Pérouse Expedition made an invaluable contribution to the ethnography of Easter Island. A geographical engineer, M. Bernizet, described the houses and the monuments of the natives with the greatest technical accuracy, and an artist represented them with exactness and ability.

In 1804 the Russian boat *Neva*, under Urey Lisiansky, sailed around the island for four days but made no attempt to land (143, pp. 51-60).

Shortly after the visit of the *Neva*, the captain of the American schooner *Nancy* kidnapped 12 men and 10 women after a bloody combat with the natives. The victims were to have been taken to the island of Massafuero, where a colony was to be established for seal hunting. When the boat was three days off Easter Island, the prisoners were allowed on deck. The men immediately jumped overboard and swam in the direction of their home. Efforts of the captain to rescue them were vain. This same captain made several raids on the island to recruit seamen for the same project. These attacks changed the friendly attitude of the natives toward foreigners to distrust and hostility. For this reason, when Alexander Adams, captain of the Hawaiian brig the *Kahu-manu* (1806) and Captain Winship of the *Albatross* (1809) arrived at the island they were unable to land (127, vol. 1, pp. 142-144).

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Interesting for their native psychology And for the history of the first contact between European and native cultures are the anecdotes told by Zumbohm (230, vol. 5, p. 666): 177 152

> When the first horse was taken ashore the natives were greatly excited. "Some ran away as fast as they could, others lay on the ground. Those who were sufficiently brave to consider the strange thing a bit closer were not a little amazed when they saw the animal divide into two pieces when the rider dismounted." The islanders seem to have realized what a marvelous invention the wheel was. "When the wheelbarrow was loaded and set in motion, our islanders shouted with sheer admiration; the turning wheel was to them a living thing."
>
> In 1935, officers of the *Mercator* rode bicycles on the island. Though the natives were acquainted with cars and other vehicles, the bicycles created genuine bewilderment. Many made the sign of the cross and muttered "Tatane", expressing thus the fear that the device was the work of the devil.

In 1868 the English battleship *Topaze* visited the island and took away the statue called Hoa-haka-nana-ia, which stood in a house of Orongo. Palmer (171), the surgeon on the ship, made a rapid survey of the island and went as far as Rano-raraku, which he described for the first time. His scanty information about native life shows how greatly the old culture had been impaired. The most valuable data were given him by Roussel. 114 ● 175

Captain Ignacio L. Gana, who has written a much-quoted treatise (86) about the island, visited it on the Chilean corvette *O'Higgins*, which stopped there in 1870. All of Gana's information derives from Roussel; unfortunately the Chilean officer either misunderstood or altered the original statements of the missionary so that his information is misleading.

The successful work of the missionaries was brutally interrupted in 1870 by the activities of a French adventurer, Dutroux-Bornier, who settled on the island. Dutroux-Bornier bought from the natives, for some pieces of cloth, the place called Mataveri, one of the most fertile lands of the island. Later he associated—for the exploitation of the island—with a wealthy trader of Tahiti, Mr. Brander. Very soon Dutroux-Bornier quarreled with the missionaries and started an open war against them. He was supported by the natives who had left the village of Hanga-roa to live with him in Mataveri and by the people of Anakena who were envious of those of Hanga-roa. Torometi, who seems to have been a chief or a man with considerable influence, joined Dutroux-Bornier. The people of Mataveri made several raids, which were reciprocated by the people of Hanga-roa. A war broke out in which the huts of both sides were burned and some men killed. Dutroux-Bornier went so far as to shell the village with gunfire. Every day Dutroux-Bornier's men plundered Hanga-roa and Vaihu which were at last entirely destroyed. Finally Bishop Tepano Jaussen ordered the missionaries to depart from a place where no more work could be done. The same year Brander sent a boat to Easter Island to recruit part of the population for his plantations in Tahiti. He had promised that this boat would carry all the natives willing to settle with the 175 721 797 167 175

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167 175 missionaries in Mangareva. The whole population decided to abandon their home country, but about 175 were obliged to remain because the ship was too small or, more likely, because Dutroux-Bornier needed workers and induced the captain to manage so that enough islanders were left.

175 On June 24, 1871, the Russian corvette *Vitias* stopped for a few hours in the bay of Hanga-roa. Apparently nobody went ashore and the information about the island published by Miklukho-Maklay was obtained in Mangareva from Father Roussel where the Russian sloop stopped for four days.

In 1872, the French warship *La Flore*, under Admiral F. T. de Lapelin touched briefly at Easter Island. The head of a large statue on the Hanga-roa ahu (ahu Ana-koiroroa) was taken aboard to be presented to a French museum. Pierre Loti, who was then a midshipman on board the *La Flore*, wrote a description (146) more poetical and romantic than accurate, which has popularized in France the legend and the mystery of Easter Island.

The French warship *Seignelay* visited the island in 1877, a few days after the natives had murdered Dutroux-Bornier. At that time, there was apparently nothing left of the work of the missionaries. The French traveler, Pinart (178), who accompanied the *Seignelay*, made a rapid survey of the archaeological remains on the island, paying slight attention to the native life.

After 1877, the ships which called at Easter Island became so numerous that it is unnecessary to mention their visits unless they have added to our information about the past of the island or have effected some changes in the life of the islanders. Since 1864 white men have been permanently established on the island; through them and Tahitians much of European influence has come to the natives.

175 177 After the death of Dutroux-Bornier, Alexander P. Salmon, associate of Brander, took his place on the island. Salmon, who was an intelligent man and half Tahitian, understood native ways. Certainly he has done more than anyone else to modify the ideas and the material life of the Easter Islanders. Economically the changes were important—more cattle were introduced, and in 1886 there were already 18,000 sheep on the island.

175 114 Geiseler visited the island in 1882 as commander of the German sloop *Hyane*. In the few days he spent there, he made the most complete ethnological collection which has ever been obtained from the island and gathered much important data.

The American ship *Mohican* stopped at Easter Island for 11 days at the end of 1886. Paymaster Thomson and Dr. Cooke, surgeon of the ship, made a general survey of the archaeology of the island and recorded precious ethnological data. Thomson's report on Easter Island is perhaps, aside from the narratives of the first discoverers, the most important source on the past of the island, but Salmon, who was on the island at the time of the visits of Geiseler and Thomson, must be credited for most of the data and the

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documents which have been recorded. The chants and native poetry published by Thomson were transcribed and translated by Salmon, who also obtained the long list of kings which is given in the same paper.

During 1914-1915 Mrs. Routledge spent 16 months on the island and thoroughly studied its archaeology and ethnology. Unfortunately only the popular account (194) of this expedition and a monograph on Orongo (195) have been published. Routledge's survey seems to have been very detailed, and it is regrettable that her findings have not been made available.

Although France had certain rights on the island, she formally renounced them, and in 1888 the Chilean captain, Policarpo Toro, annexed the island for Chile. An unsuccessful attempt at colonization was made by Pedro Toro Hurtado, who took a group of Chileans to the island. Mr. H. Merlet of Valparaiso acquired from the representatives of Brander, Dutroux-Bornier, and Salmon the interests they held on Easter Island. The Chilean government leased the whole island with the exception of the village of Hanga-roa and the near-by lands which remained the property of the natives. The interests purchased by Merlet were sold to the Compania Explotadora de la Isla de Pascua (Williamson and Balfour Co.) who still own the land.

Every year the Chilean training ship *Baquedano* goes to Easter Island. The commander of the ship has a supervisory authority and settles all the conflicts which have arisen during the year. Unfortunately the *Baquedano* stops at the island for only a few days, and the various problems of the natives can receive but superficial treatment. The training ship carries to the island old clothes given by Chilean families. These are distributed among the natives, very often in exchange for curios.

The Williamson and Balfour Co. is the only real link the natives have with western civilization. It gives them work and the opportunity to buy the European articles and food they need. Of the 61 square miles, 7.72 square miles belong to the natives; the rest belongs to the company. At present the natives have more land than they need and cultivate only a part of it. When a young couple marries, the government gives them 10 hectares. Perhaps in the distant future, if the population continues to increase at the present rate, the islanders will need more land. With the exception of employees of the company, the natives are not allowed to cross the boundaries of the strip of land which is reserved for them. This measure, which may seem drastic, has been taken to prevent sheep stealing, which is carried on by natives as a kind of sport. Despite barbed wire, no week passes in which they fail to organize a raid on the sheep. Between two and three thousand animals disappeared thus in 1934.

A few natives are permanent employees of the company. They watch the gates which give access to the company's property, form night patrols, and do routine work on the farms. At shearing time most of the young men and women on the island gather at Vai-tea, the farm in the middle of the island,

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TRADITIONAL HISTORY

There is no other Polynesian island whose past is so little known as that of Easter Island. This is largely due to sudden reductions of population (pp. 20-23) and the complete acceptance of European culture and belief. Fifteen years ago there were still a few men who remembered the ancient culture. Now (1934) there are only two old women who were born before the Christian era. The information on past history which may be gathered is not in the form of direct testimony, but rather in indirect evidence, emanating from a few survivals of the past.

Material on traditional history of Easter Island is limited to several lists of kings which are of dubious value and to a few legends, almost exclusively concerned with the period of settlement, the rivalry between the Long-ears and the Short-ears, and the war between Tuu and Hotu-iti districts. The first period of traditional history deals with the migration, settlement, and great deeds of Hotu-matua and his followers. After this is the long period extending to the present time, in which the only recorded events are intertribal wars, manifestations of the mana of kings, and some incidents such as the discovery of obsidian or the tumbling down of the statues. The struggle between Long-ears and Short-ears is a tale too simple to justify the intercalation of a separate period between the settlement era and the later ages. Lacking genealogies, traditional history of Easter Island has no chronological guide.

SETTLEMENT PERIOD

Sources

Traditions referring to the settlement period were collected at a very early date. Roussel's recently published manuscript (190, p. 357) contains the earliest account of the landing of the first king at Anakena, as told by the natives. It is likely that the brief allusions made by Palmer (171, p. 180) and Gana (86, p. 32) to the same legend derive from the same source and were communicated to them by Roussel. Thanks to the intelligent curiosity of Alexander Salmon, Thomson (215, pp. 526-529) was able to get a complete and detailed native version of the voyage of Hotu-matua and the discovery of Easter Island. Salmon told the same legend to Clark (52, p. 145). Mrs. Routledge had the good fortune to get from an old native another version, abundant with details which even Thomson's text lacks. Juan Tepano, my informant, dictated to me in the native language a fairly good text on the same subject, enabling me to understand much obscure information, discarded or misinterpreted by former investigators. The legend of Hotu-matua as published by Brown (27, pp. 39-42) has the same origin. Despite some divergencies, there is unity between the various versions which seems to indicate a body of traditions which has been transmitted in a fixed pattern.

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Discovery and Settlement

The first immigrants to Easter Island came from an island called either Marae-renga (115, p. 241, and Tepano) or Marae-toe-hau (215, p. 527), or from both these islands (194, p. 277). All the natives agree that their ancestors came from the west, and this seems to be the opinion commonly held in the past. Salmon told Clark (52, p. 145) and Thomson (215, p. 527) that the land of Hotu-matua lay to the east, but, in his later interview with Geiseler (87, p. 43), he recognized that this belief contradicted other native opinion. Belief in the eastern origin of their ancestors was held by those natives who considered the Galapagos Islands the sailing point of the immigrants. The inconsistency of this tradition is shown by the fact that the Galapagos have been uninhabited up to the present time and were unknown to Easter Islanders until after European contact.

The version told to me of the arrival of Hotu-matua on Easter Island makes no mention of the antecedents of the migrators nor the causes, real or otherwise, which induced the king to search for a new home. Thomson (215, pp. 527-528) and Routledge (194, pp. 277-278) give abundant, though varying, details concerning the preliminary causes of this migration. Perhaps the incompatibility of important details suggests, instead of differences in traditions concerning that period, a long and involved series of episodes which could easily have been confused or forgotten. Thomson's version, which is the more ancient as well as the more consistent, is not entirely reliable and many things seem to have been misinterpreted. Routledge's text is apparently incomplete. According to both versions, Hotu-matua was a king on Marae-renga and had succeeded his father whose name was Te-Riri-ka-atea. Routledge (194, p. 277) writes that Hotu-matua's departure from the island was the consequence of a quarrel between him and his brother, Te-Ita-ke-atea. Hotu-matua was defeated and obliged to go in search of a new country.

All the versions of the settlement legend agree that Hotu-matua was not the first man to sight the island but that he had been preceded by six men who landed a little before he did. The circumstances under which these six men left their country to look for a new land are given by Routledge (194, p. 278):

> Now there was on one of the islands a certain Haumaka, who had tattooed Hotu, and received from him in return a present of mother of pearl which had been given to Hotu's father by an individual called Tuhu-patoea. Tuhu had seen that the men who went down to get pearls were eaten by a big fish, so he invented a net by which the precious shell could be obtained without risk, and the pearl so procured he had presented to his chief, Ko Riri. This man, Haumaka, had a dream, and during it his spirit went to a far country, and when he awoke he told six men, whose names are given, to go and seek for it; they were to look for a land where there were three islets and a big

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173 778 Father Butaye (37, p. 30) in 1898. The natives showed him the place where a big earth oven had been dug out to cook a huge tuna fish. The same legend was told to Routledge (194, p. 182), a crayfish taking the place of the tuna. Estella (79, pp. 37-38) omits the end of this tale, thereby making the whole story meaningless:

> The carvers of the big images sent the people to get fish and crayfish in all the places. The fishermen arrived at Kikiri-mariu. They dived after a crayfish and they entered a hole where there were the body, the tail, and the legs of the crayfish. The divers came up to the surface and said to the people above that the crayfish was so large that it could not be caught. Other people came and dived, but they died.
>
> The people to whom the crayfish belonged made a big net. Although six men had already died on account of the big crayfish with the long tail, they went to capture it amidst the cries of the crowd. They entered the sea, and swam until they arrived above the hole. One young man dived down to the crayfish and opened his net. Two others drove the crayfish into it. When the crayfish was in it, the two young men pulled the rope and brought the net to the surface. They made for the shore with the crayfish. The people shouted, "Eh, eh, the large crayfish with the long tail has been caught." All admired the crayfish that the young men were carrying to Oiohie. They presented the crayfish to the image carvers, who shouted to an old magician woman: "Light the earth oven to cook the large crayfish with the long tail, Te-tu-kote-ura-rarapenui." The old woman lit the earth oven, put in the crayfish and sweet potatoes, and said to the carvers, "When the food is done, take it out of the earth oven, but leave some of the crayfish for me." The stone carvers said, "All right." The old woman went to the house of her brothers where she stayed to talk.
>
> When the crayfish was cooked, the image carvers opened the earth oven and ate everything without thinking of the old woman. Then they returned to the statue Te Tokanga which they were carving. They had finished the face, the neck, and the hands. They were undercutting it to remove it and erect it on the ahu Vinapu and the ahu Mataitai. The old woman returned and saw that the earth oven had been opened and the crayfish eaten; only the shell remained. She said angrily, "Where is my share of the crayfish?" They said, "There is no more. We forgot you and that is why nothing has been left." The magician shouted, "Men who are standing, fall down. This is because nothing has been left of the large crayfish with the long tail, and to teach you never to take my belongings again." All the statues fell down, for the heart of the magician was full of anger.

GENEALOGIES OF KINGS

114 173 If Easter Island had kingly genealogies similar to those recorded for other parts of Polynesia, most of her mysteries might be solved. It would be possible to determine the approximate date of the first landing of Polynesian immigrants on the island, and thus to relate its traditional history to that of some other island. The early missionaries and travelers who inquired about the past of Easter Island accepted as genealogies mere lists of kings. Each author who got a list of Easter Island kings was convinced that he had the correct sequence of *ariki-mau* (supreme chief) who succeeded to power by order of primogeniture. But there are several lists which coincide neither in names nor in number of kings. A comparison of these documents gives one the impression that the informants remembered the beginning of the genealogies and of course the last kings, who lived in recent times, but forgot or

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confused many of the intervening names. Some of these names undoubtedly refer to *ariki* (chiefs or noblemen) famous as ancestors of lineages or remembered for some special deed in the past. 114 173

There are many published lists of Easter Island kings, but all, except my own, are more or less faulty copies of the lists of Roussel, Jaussen, or Thomson. The first list of kings was recorded by Father Roussel (190, p. 358), probably in 1867 or 1868. This list was copied by Gana (86, p. 31) in 1870 and by De Lapelin (129, p. 103) in 1872. Various misspellings have crept into these two lists and several names have been run together as one. Gana includes three names not given by Roussel. Lesson (140, vol. 2, pp. 290-293) reproduces the lists of both Gana and De Lapelin with some unfortunate changes in spelling.

Bishop Jaussen's list of Easter Island kings was published posthumously in 1893, edited by Father Idlephonse Alazard. Jaussen probably obtained this list from an Easter Island native working for Brander in Tahiti. De Lapelin published what is undoubtedly a copy of this list as a footnote to his memoirs (129, p. 109, note). The orthography of this second list of De Lapelin appears to be the most correct of all the lists.

In 1886 Thomson transcribed from Salmon's data the longest list of kings that has been recorded. Unfortunately there are so many errors in spelling that it is difficult to use his list. A manuscript by W. D. Alexander in Bishop Museum, presumably copied from Thomson's original papers, reproduces his list with seemingly correct orthography.

In 1915 Routledge (194, p. 241) transcribed two independent lists, each containing 30 names. Neither of them has yet been published.

My own list of kings was dictated to me by the daughter of Ure-vaeiko, one of Thomson's informants. Besides native memory, my list is based on a fragmentary record that my friend Tepano had inscribed in a notebook many years ago. 173 [115]

The following table gives all recorded names of Easter Island kings in the sequence in which they were recorded. Where misspelling is obvious, the names have been transcribed in their probable form based on rules of Polynesian phonetics. But wherever a change was doubtful, I retained the original spelling even though it was apparently incorrect. W. D. Alexander's manuscript version of Thomson's list is quoted here as being more accurate than the list appearing in Thomson's publication (215). Initials in parentheses, standing for Roussel, Jaussen, Thomson, and Métraux, following a name indicate duplication of that name in another list. Numbers following initials indicate sequence.

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have been most frequent among the chiefly women. Unfortunate love, spite, jealousy, and hurt vanity were probably the main causes of suicide. It is probable that suicide has not occurred recently as I do not remember having a single case mentioned to me by natives.

Concepts of Life after Death

There are two contradictory statements about the Easter Island beliefs concerning the after life. These may contain some truth but are probably superficial and inaccurate statements. The more ancient and the more reliable information is that of Roussel, who says (190, p. 495):

> After death the soul of a person went to a foreign country where the degree of his happiness depended upon the extent to which he had respected tapus during his life. If the soul was happy (well dressed) it remained forever in the new country. If it was unhappy (poorly dressed), it returned to harass its relatives.

Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 120) expresses the same general idea, but adds that the souls of bad people stay near the corpses and suffer hunger and thirst in proportion to their wickedness. It has already been shown that the latter belief justified the food offerings put on the graves (p. 118).

This view of the future life is probably too ingenuous to be the true conception of the learned natives. Another version of the same problem, collected by Geiseler (87, p. 31) many years later, associates the destiny of souls with the god Makemake who kills and eats the souls of the wicked dead, while the souls of the good are allowed to rest on the island under his protection. The unburied dead can see Makemake when he comes for them and thus may escape him. Geiseler (87, p. 30) mistook the hen houses scattered about the island for sepulchers and made the erroneous statement that the dead of high rank were put into a stone house that had two holes through which their souls might escape when pursued by Makemake. Beliefs concerning ghosts and the uncanny appearance of souls of the dead have been dealt with elsewhere (pp. 318-320).

There is a belief, expressed in legends, that the souls of the departed were helpful to their relatives and sent them material favors. One father promised his son before his death that he would send him a tree, another foretold the coming of a turtle (p. 372). These gifts were exclusively destined to the persons designated by the dead man; if other people attempted to appropriate them the gifts were withdrawn. The same belief existed in the Tuamotus.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Very little information on social organization can be found in the missionaries' accounts of Easter Island. This is not due to lack of interest but rather to the series of catastrophes which befell Easter Island immediately preceding the advent of the missionaries and which removed from the tribes their

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ancient social importance. When Eyraud landed in 1863, the population was distributed in Hanga-roa, Anakena, perhaps Vaihu, and the district surrounding Rano-raraku. The missionaries concentrated the population in a single village and thus broke the last connections of the individuals with their ancestral territory. The memory of the old order survived with remarkable tenacity and as late as 1914 Routledge was able to obtain from aged natives references to lineage groups and their respective distribution. Williamson incorporated some unpublished material given him by Routledge in his study of the Easter Island political system (228, vol. 1, pp. 384-409). My study is based upon Routledge, Williamson, and new evidence which I obtained from natives.

TRIBES

Until recently the entire population of Easter Island was divided into ten paternal descent groups, called "clans" by Routledge. However, the word clan is too definite to be accurate here. I prefer the more general and more appropriate term tribe (*mata*). Although more than two thirds of the present population of Easter Island is composed of half-castes, each native knows to which tribe he belongs, either through his father, or, if the father is a foreigner, through his mother.

Probably at one time every tribe had its own territory which was known by the name of the group. Later the tribes became more scattered and isolated members or entire households of one tribe lived within the limits of another district; in some regions along the coast representatives of more than three groups were mixed. The old territorial divisions thus came to be mere districts where the main part of the *mata*, perhaps the senior line, was settled, and had little to do with the actual distribution of the tribes.

The spreading of the members of a tribe outside of the district bearing the name of the *mata* might have been the consequence of intermarriage and probably also of adoption if the adopted children kept their relationship to the paternal group. Certainly war was an agent of diffusion. Legends frequently allude to defeated people who asked for the protection of some relative among the victors. Members of the tribe which had been crushed in a war became prisoners or subjects (*kio*) of the victors. The *kio* were treated as slaves. Gana (86, p. 34) writes:

> The vanquished men fell as captives to the victor who carried off everything belonging to them including their wives and daughters. The conquered persons were forced to cultivate the ground of their owners. When the victor became tired of his slave as consequence of his age or of some illness, he drove him away and gave him permission to attend to his own affairs. The defeated man, fearing to be made a slave a second time, cultivated only a tenth of the land needed to support him and his family. He preferred to starve rather than arouse the jealousy of his enemies. According to the missionaries and other people with experience in this matter the fear of slavery has been one of the principal factors in decimating the Easter Island people who have become emaciated and consumptive.

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415 berry fiber running over the edge and through the doubled up border. The short ends are sewn together with continuous horizontal stitches across a band of paper mulberry bast 8 mm. wide which completely encircles the container. Some containers have two compartments and a small container has only one.

Other Headdresses

291 I was told that formerly the women occasionally wore on their heads pieces of tapa cloth, stained with turmeric; these were called *pouo roiroi*.

[578 765] A special circlet (*vanavana*) was worn by men "in delivering a challenge to combat for revenge" (215, p. 535). Geiseler (87, p. 28) mentions that the revengeful mourner (*timo-ika*) covered his head with "a rough crown made of horsehair" (Mus. für Völkerkunde, Berlin, VI.4977) about which his catalog gives the following information: "Headdress of horsehair to look like a woman. Name: *ivive*. This wig is used when a man calls secretly on a woman in order not to be noticed. These objects are rare and these were the only specimens."

301 114 According to Tepano, men and women of the past often wore a sort of "comb" (*harihari*) in their hair. In this ornament, feathers were tied to small sticks with strips of paper mulberry, banana, or *hau* bark. Since no specimen of this kind of comb has been preserved and since none of the early or recent voyagers to Easter Island mention it, the truth of Tepano's statement may be doubted.

Women's Hats

291 Until the middle of the nineteenth century the women wore a special kind of hat (*hau pouo*), which is described by G. Forster (83, vol. 1, p. 566): [285] "The women wore a great wide cap, made of very neat mat-work; it was pointed forwards, formed a ridge along the top, and two large lobes behind on each side, which we found extremely cooling for the head." No specimen of these hats for women has been preserved. However, they have been figured by Cook (53, vol. 1, p. 290) and La Pérouse (130, pl. 11). Such hats are [532] carved on the heads of two images of women in Bishop Museum. These images are not very ancient, but were certainly made when these headdresses were still in use. The two lobes are larger on the back than on the front and are raised on both ends. The general form of the hat is elliptical and was worn lengthwise. From Cook's plate we may infer that these hats were made of small plaited strips sewn together like modern straw hats of European type.

Headdresses of Unusual Type

The Peabody Museum at Cambridge has two Easter Island headdresses which represent types that are neither mentioned in the literature nor remem-

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301 each end terminated in a head, the concavity was worn uppermost, the profile
532 of the face in the oldest gorget was very aquiline."

Some authors have advanced the theory that the crescentic *rei-miro* were images of the boats with high stern and bow which brought the natives to their present home. Not a single fact confirms this fanciful conjecture. In collecting the *rei-miro* which are in Bishop Museum, Young (229) received some information from Easter Island natives which is perhaps worth reproducing here though Young is an unreliable authority:

[114]

> I have been assured by old natives of Rapanui, that these are practically reproductions of similar objects which were hidden in caves after the introduction of Christianity, and which have disappeared. These objects are furnished with holes for strings to enable them to be worn as breast plates on ceremonial occasions. Hence, the name *rei* (breastplate). But they were also called *rei-marama* (*marama*, moon) and the old natives declared that the shapes of the different crescents were meant to represent different phases of the luminary and were worn at feasts held at the time of the planting of the *kumara*. I have been unable to obtain any description of the prayers or chants which were used at these ceremonies . . . I have possessed these crescents since 1888, when I obtained them from Rapanui through a reliable agent.

Tepano's assertion that only men's *rei-miro* had an oval-shaped depression on the front is dubious. So perhaps is his statement that three or four variegated shells (*rei-pipi*) were tied as tassels to the wooden crescent. On those that I have examined, there are no holes to which ornaments might have been attached. However, a petroglyph representing a *rei-miro* is provided with two perpendicular lines which can be interpreted as two conventionalized strings with tassels.

A *rei-miro* in the British Museum (195, fig. 115) has a row of tablet signs on its lower border. Another, obtained during Geiseler's visit to Easter Island and now in the Australian Museum (216, p. 149), is also decorated with signs, many of which are similar to those on the tablets. According to Geiseler's report (87, p. 35) and the label which accompanies the specimen (216, p. 149), it belonged to the king's family for many generations. After the kidnapping of Maurata, it was left to a chief called Hangeto. However, the signs engraved on this *rei-miro* look like crude imitations of the original symbols. They have been marked with little care, and symmetry has been neglected. As far as one may infer from the photograph, a steel implement was used to incise them.

A large *rei-miro* in Bishop Museum (fig. 28, *a*) is ornamented with a male head at each end. These heads have the goatee and resemble in all respects, except the pointed poll, the representation of the face in the male wooden images. The upper edge of the crescent is grooved from end to end. The *rei-miro* was supported by a cord which passed round the neck of the wearer and through holes perforated in two lugs near the upper margin of the crescent. On the reverse side a small crescent is sunk within wide margins. A small *rei-miro* in Bishop Museum is 345 mm. long.

A very small *rei-miro* in the collection of Charles Ratton, Paris (fig. 28, *b*) has ends ornamented by cock's heads with eyes of inlaid rings of bone and a piece of obsidian. A groove extends along the top from end to end. The suspension holes are pierced obliquely through the upper edge.

A *rei-miro* of whale bone in Bishop Museum (fig. 28, *c*) is called *rei-taoraha* (*taoraha* is the humpback or blackfish whale).

A *rei-miro* in Braine-le-Comte, Belgium (187, p. 5), demonstrates the scarcity and value of wood on Easter Island. The human head at one tip is lacking. It was not carved from the same piece of wood but was sewn on through a series of small holes.

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thin blue lines reminiscent of mittens. Neither woman is completely tattooed. Viriamo refused to submit to further sittings after the tights were covered with tattooing because the operation was too painful. Ana Eva Hei, who is younger, was probably decorated when the last experts were dying.

The best source for ancient tattooing designs are three images, two in the Peabody Museum at Cambridge, Massachusetts (53542, 53543) and one in the Belfast Museum. They are made of bulrush and covered with sheets of tapa on which are painstakingly reproduced the elaborate patterns of a fully tattooed person (figs. 30 and 31). Equally valuable are the photographs and the sketches made by Stolpe (214) of an Easter Islander whom he met in the Marquesas.

FIGURE 31.—Image made of bulrushes tied together with fiber bands and covered with tapa, technique identical to that of image shown in figure 30 (Peabody Mus., Cambridge, 53543): *a*, front; *b*, back; *c*, side; maximum length of head 19 cm.; spear head on chest 7.7 cm. long; marks on forearms indistinct (possibly a bird figure on right arm); legs tattooed in chevrons and triangles; erect penis reddish; total height 46 cm.

Other evidence on tattooing is provided by sketches made by travelers and reproduced in their narratives. Some of these graphic representations are supplemented by short descriptions in the text (90, p. 98). The oldest drawing of a tattooed Easter Island native was made by Hodges, the artist on Cook's second voyage (53, vol. 1, p. 291). Choris (49) sketched a fully

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304 114 tattooed man during his visit to Easter Island, but his drawing is inaccurate in many details. The artist of Du Petit-Thouars' expedition (65, pl. 44) drew a man and a woman, both partially tattooed. The accurate portraits of tattooed Easter Islanders by Pierre Loti (145, pp. 66-68) and the more schematic designs by Thomson (215, p. 466, fig. 4, *a-b*) have contributed to the preservation of knowledge about tattooing. In 1911 Knoche (123, pl. 13, p. 160) drew the last Easter Island woman with elaborate designs on her body. A few years later, Routledge (194, p. 219) was obliged to depend on the memories of the old men for analysis of ancient motifs. The reconstruction of ancient tattooing made for her by Tepano is not inaccurate but simplified and purely schematic. The wooden images can be used in the reconstruction of the old tattooing patterns; the oldest ones generally have a human figure carved in relief on the top of the head. An attentive examination reveals conventionalized tattooing motifs incised on the faces of these figures.

304 In the following analysis of the various Easter Island tattoo motifs, the most elaborate design for each region of the body is used as a basis. Information from literature is used to complete descriptions or to emphasize the persistence of fundamental motifs, which were repeated on all individuals, both male and female, and were faithfully preserved from one generation to the next. Geiseler (87, p. 36) contradicts evidence when he writes: "We looked for a constant pattern, which we were unable to find. Everyone had different signs. The persons which were shown to us as being the chiefs were the most tattooed, but their motifs were also different." It is true, however, that personal taste varied the general patterns. Perhaps different tribes or subtribes had favorite designs, but in general the selected motifs depended on patterns. Even Geiseler admits that certain designs were more common than others.

Extent of Tattooing

Tattooing is mentioned by nearly every voyager who touched at Easter Island. Though there were probably differences between the motifs used by men and by women, the features noticed by early observers are common to both. There is no way of determining the variations in designs for the two sexes. However, Cook (53, vol. 1, p. 290) says that the women, in contrast to men, were only slightly marked.

It appears from the reports of early travelers that the extent of tattooing varied with individuals. In the greater number, tattooing was confined to small surfaces of the body (15, vol. 1, p. 53). Kotzebue (127, p. 140) noticed that "they were all tattooed and those who are over the whole body have [566] the appearance of chiefs." This remark is probably correct as full tattooing in Polynesia is, as a rule, an expression of wealth.

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171 533 festivals. They also attended feasts organized by the king or by chiefs to recite genealogies and chants in praise of nobility. They knew and transmitted to their pupils both sacred and profane lore (28, pp. 304-305).

In the Tuamotus the word *rongo* is applied to formal chants about the exploits or feats of a hero, recited by the *tahunga one*. *Rongo* is also the name of a "mourning chant for a deceased hero."

Reciters and chanters are familiar elements in the general pattern of Polynesian culture, but it is significant that it is only in the eastern part of Polynesia that we find the word *rongorongo* associated with a special class of bards.

171 212 533 The tablets of the Easter Island *rongorongo* were often sticks covered with symbols. In this connection it is important to mention that the *rongorongo* of Mangareva beat the measure with staffs (*kohau*) when chanting. In the Marquesas the ceremonial symbol of the *tuhuna o'ono* was a bundle of three *fau* stakes wrapped in cloth (104, p. 230). Maori orators always held clubs (*taiaha*) in their hands, without which they could not deliver a speech.

TABLETS

● 114 212 The wooden tablets, covered with rows of small figures, are a puzzle to science and constitute the most complicated problem of Easter Island culture. Though many hypotheses have been, or may be, presented to explain their significance, it is probable that the mystery will never be solved, for data are few.

[322] The so-called hieroglyphs or glyphs of the Easter Island script were incised with shark teeth or sharp obsidian flakes on boards, on sticks, and sometimes on wooden images or ornaments. In the Easter Island collection of Bishop Museum there are small obsidian points which may well have been used for this purpose.

Twenty tablets or fragments of tablets, scattered throughout institutions of the world, have been preserved and a corpus of all the known tablets is being prepared by Dr. Alan S. C. Ross.

The most important collection of all Easter Island tablets is preserved in the Museum de la Congrégation des Sacrés Coeurs de Picpus in Braine-le-Comte (Belgium). The four tablets kept there were collected by the first missionaries to Easter Island and were given to Bishop Tepano Jaussen of Tahiti. The largest one, called Tahua or the "Oar" is 90 cm. long and 14 cm. wide and has 1,547 signs. Another, called Aruku-kurenga, is 41 cm. long and 15.5 cm. wide. A third, called Mamari, is 21 cm. by 30 cm. In the Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna, there are two tablets, only one of which is authentic. The other, 25.5 cm. long and 5.2 cm. wide, is probably a fake. (See 97, p. 101, fig. 1, pl. 10.) The little tablet in the British Museum, 21 cm. long and 7.3 cm. wide (58), is not ancient. The tablet made of apple-tree wood in the Lateran Museum, Rome (6442), is a crude fake. Two tablets in the Museum of Santiago de Chile were taken by the *O'Higgins* in 1870; one of these is 35 cm. long and 12 cm. wide, the other is 45 cm. long and 11.5 cm. wide. Two tablets purchased by Thomson in 1886 are in the National Museum, Washington. One tablet is preserved in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin. There are two tablets in the Museum of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad. One of these,

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given by Jaussen in 1871 to the Russian ship *Vitiaz*, is 62 cm. long and 14 cm. wide and has 11 rows of signs on each face; the other, purchased by N. N. Miklukho-Maklay during the same cruise, is 42 cm. long and 9 cm. wide and has 9 rows of signs on each face (179, p. 425). In Bishop Museum there are two tablets with the signs partly destroyed and a fragment of a tablet (445) collected by Lt. Symonds of the U.S.S. *Mohican*. One tablet is in the collection of Stephen Chauvet, Paris. The tablet called Keiti belonged to the collection of Bishop Tepano Jaussen. It was given to the library of the University of Louvain which burned in 1914. Fortunately photographs and a rubbing of this tablet were preserved and published by Lavachery (138). Another tablet was given by French missionaries to the Chilean ship *O'Higgins* but it never reached France, its destination. The Musée de l'homme in Paris has casts of most of the tablets in existence.

Only one of the sticks covered with tablet signs, mentioned by Eyraud (81, vol. 38, p. 71), has been preserved. It was given to officers of the *O'Higgins* in 1870 by Dutroux-Bornier, who thought that it was a weapon belonging to a king (176, p. 676). The stick is 1.25 meters long and 6 cm. thick. It is round and tapers toward one end. There are 13 rows of figures with an average of 115 signs each and an additional row at the thick end. A pectoral (*rei-miro*) in the British Museum has a row of signs carved on it (57) and an image of a bird-man in the American Museum is decorated with a few tablet figures. Thomson (215, p. 535) claims to have brought back a "calabash covered with hieroglyphics similar to those found on the incised tablets," but this specimen disappeared from the Easter Island collection in the National Museum, Washington.

A certain importance has been attributed to the wood of the tablets as a result of the theory that Easter Island tablets may have been imported into the island by the first immigrants. The analyses show that the following woods were used for the tablets: Lauracene, Myrtaceae, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Thespesia populnea*, *Podocarpus latifolia*, *Pyrus malus* (131, p. 70). The beautiful tablet called the "Oar", whose authenticity has never been questioned, was engraved on a European oar of *Fraxinus excelsior*. Thus it must date from the end of the eighteenth century or the first half of the nineteenth century A. D. This particular tablet, one of the largest and purest in style, was collected by the French missionaries about 1867 or 1869, at a time when natives paid little attention to tablets. The wooden tablets could not have been kept for centuries in rain-drenched, thatched huts, or in caves. How then could these tablets have been saved during thousands of years of migration and war and come to us in the form of a modern European oar?

The signs are incised on both faces of a tablet. Between each row of signs is a low ridge, produced by slightly sunken channels or flutes along which the signs have been engraved. On the tablet called Aruku-kurenga, of which the Bishop Museum has a cast, these channels are 1.5 cm. [illegible]. The channels were produced by longitudinally adzing the piece of wood. The carver must have held the plank in a vertical position with the left hand and formed the plane surface by striking regular blows with his adz. The signs are outlined by angular grooves of varying depth. The skill displayed by the artist is masterly; all the signs are incised with a freedom, a keen appreciation of proportion, and a vigor that only an expert artist could accomplish. There

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many men he had killed in war, how many chickens he had stolen." A man named Kapiera told Routledge (194, pp. 251-252) that the earliest *tau* was made by an ancestor of Hotu-matua, the first king of the island. A large tablet contained a list of the lesser tablets "giving merely the name of each hero and the year of his *koro*." The names were enumerated and followed with figures corresponding to the year when the *koro* was celebrated. The numbers went to ten, then began again. "If there were two *koro* in a year, they came under the same numeral." 212

There was also a tablet for *ika* (murdered men). It was known to only one person, "who taught it to a pupil, and the two divided the island between them, the master taking the west and the north coast to Anakena and the pupil the remainder. A connected, or possibly the same tablet, was made at the instance of the relatives of the victim and helped to secure vengeance" (194, p. 248).

Some tablets dealt with ceremonies, and others were part of ceremonies themselves. They were in evidence at *koro*, where Nga-ara and the professors used to "pray for the father" and where a woman went onto the roof of the house holding the "kohau-o-te-pure" (prayer tablet). "In another case, a woman who wished to honour her father-in-law, and at the same time secure fertility, set up a pole round which she walked holding a child and a tablet, given her by Nga-ara while he and other *rongorongo* men who brought their *kohau* at his order stood by and sang" (194, p. 249). Thirteen subjects were dealt with in the tablets. No mention was made either to Routledge or me of genealogies, lists of *ariki*, or the wanderings of the people. [842]

The tablets were said to be tapu and were handled only by the *rongorongo* men and their servants. When kept in the hut they were wrapped in mats and hung from the roof. During war they were regarded by the victorious party as valuable spoils. [784]

Tablets are first mentioned in 1864 by Eyraud (81, vol. 38, p. 71) who says they were found in almost every house although the natives did not understand their meaning and showed little respect for them. Several years later Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 232) collected some tablets and attempted unsuccessfully to learn the meaning of the incised signs. He gathered the most learned natives who "seemed pleased" to see the tablet and told him its name. Then some started to read the page by "chanting." But others disagreed on the chant and the discouraged missionary gave up his inquiry. Roussel (190, p. 464) scarcely mentions the tablets and assumes that the characters never had a meaning. "The few natives who pretended to know them, recited when tested only ridiculous and meaningless tales." It is worth stressing that Roussel speaks of the tablets in connection with the native chants. 212 114

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212 114 Palmer (168, p. 290) writes that a member of the Chilean expedition to Easter Island was told by one of the Padres "that when one of the tablets was found, a lad who was present began to chant its contents, when an old man present stopped him forthwith. Of course the reason for this procedure was given, that the figure-writing had reference to some religious ceremony, of which, as the older convert had abjured the practices, the recital was not judged by him prudent, nor politic to be repeated."

A thorough attempt was made by Bishop Tepano Jaussen of Tahiti, with the help of Metoro Tauara, an Easter Islander working on Brander's plantation in Tahiti, to decipher the five tablets given to him by the missionaries of Easter Island. Metoro Tauara was said to have studied the art of chanting from tablets under three teachers—Ngahu, Rei-miro and Paovaa. Jaussen (115, p. 252) describes the first session with Metoro in the following terms:

> The solemn moment had arrived. I put one of my tablets in the hands of Metoro. He turned it, turned it again, looking for the beginning of the text, and then he started to chant. He chanted the lowest line, from left to right. Arrived at the end, he chanted the nearest line above, from right to left, the third from left to right, the fourth from right to left, like the plowing of oxen. When he arrived at the top line, he passed from the recto to the nearest line of the verso and descended, line after line, like oxen plowing both sides of a hill, starting on the lower side and ending at the bottom on the opposite side. The reader can turn the tablet after each line if he does not want to read the signs upside down. . . .
>
> My interpreter told me that they used to sit in a circle and chant, as if carrying on a ceremony. Besides the word giving the proper meaning of the sign, the chant includes groups of other words added by the fancy of the artists. The learning of these required more work than that of the simple significance of the sign.
>
> To write these signs was very simple, but to learn and chant the rhapsodies of all the tablets was the difficult task. Thus Metoro conceived it. He never tried to teach a sign directly without the chant. When Roussel called the people to read the tablets, each of the pupils whose teachers were dead must have shivered at the thought of finding a tablet which he would not be able to chant. That is why no one dared to present himself. . . . Reading the tablets called Miro, Metoro did not pass to the character opposite the last chanted sign at the end of the recto, but descended diagonally to the bottom of the verso as if he were reading a new tablet. It was the beginning of another subject.

The texts of the purported chants recited by Metoro are preserved in the Museum at Papeete (Tahiti) and copies are in the convent of the Sacred Heart in Braine-le-Comte. A few lines of the text, corresponding to the beginning of the tablet called Aruku-kurenga, were published by C. de Harlez (105) with his translation which does not make sense. A tentative translation of the beginning of the same text is given by Ahnne (2, p. 190) but it is over imaginative. By comparing the text with the tablet, I discovered that 212 most of the sentences chanted were merely explanatory. For instance, about the image of a bird, Metoro would say, "the bird is flying" or "the bird is resting"; about the image of a headdress, "to the headdress." Thus the long text is simply a descriptive catalog. It is rather surprising that Metoro

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chanted these simple explanatory sentences, since they were improvised by him. However, we must remember that chanting is easy, and Metoro knew that chanting was always associated with the tablets. To illustrate Metoro's method, I shall give part of the 21st row of signs in the tablet Aruku-kurenga with the native text and its translation (fig. 56). 212

FIGURE 56.—Part of row 21 on tablet Aruku-kurenga.

1. Kua huki: He is pierced.
2. Ko te ariki: It is the king.
3. Tere ki te vai: He went to the water.
4. E tangata moe ra ki te huaga e: The man [illegible]sleeping against blossoming fruit.
5. Kua tuu ko te toga: The posts are set up.
6. Ma te tapa mea kua haga: The red yam is growing.
7. Kua hasti ia te kava: The kava plant is broken.
8. Ma te tapa mea kua haga: The red yam growing.
9. Kua hasti ia te kava: The kava plant is broken.
10. E tangata rua kua oho, kua hua: Two men went, it was blossoming.
11. Ma to ihe: Like the needlefish.
12. E i raa: And the sun.
13. E i te haga (probably huaga) era: It is blossoming.
14. Ko te rei: It is a pectoral (rei-miro).
15. Kua oho ki te henua: He came to the land.
16. Kua tupu ia mua i te aro: It has grown in front of him.
17. E tangata oho era: The man left.
18. Ki to kava e: To your kava plant.
19. Ka oho te rei: Here comes the pectoral (rei-miro).
20. Tangata itiiti: Very little man.
21. Ma to kava: Like your kava plant.

Comparison of the fragmentary sentences with the symbols makes it plain that they are hasty explanations of the drawings. The explanation becomes more obscure when the symbol is conventionalized and therefore less recognisable. Metoro's interpretation is nevertheless useful for it gives the meaning of designs, the significance of which might otherwise be a puzzle.

At about the time of Jaussen, Croft (56, p. 319) who also lived at Papeete, tried to get the Easter Island natives to translate the tablets. He gave up the attempt after one native had read the same tablet three different ways on three successive Sundays. This action is typical of many Europeans who tried to 212 114

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translate the tablets. They tackled the problem with the preconceived idea that the signs formed a script, and they angrily dismissed informants who were unable to prove that they were actually reading.

Pinart (178, p. 239) says, probably falsely, that at his time the tablets were used to roll string for fishlines and nets. Geiseler (87, pp. 23-24) obtained only general information about the tablets and that probably from Salmon to whom he had entrusted the study. He says: " . . . wooden tablets with signs for genealogies" were still in the possession of a chief named Hangeto. "This writing was known only by the former kings and chiefs . . . The script was used for two purposes: to send short notices to chiefs of other villages about important events which they did not want to entrust to oral messages, and in the form of tablets, to record genealogies."

Four years later (1886), Thomson (215, pp. 513-526) made a serious attempt to obtain from the natives a clue to the mystery of the tablets. An old man named Ure-vaeiko, who professed to have been under instruction in the art of hieroglyphic reading at the time of the Peruvian raid, claimed to understand most of the characters. Unfortunately he was very pious and "declined to furnish any information, on the ground that it had been forbidden by the priests." Finally he was prevailed upon to read from photographs of the tablets owned by Jaussen. He recited legends fluently "though it became evident that he was not actually reading the characters. It was noticed that the shifting of position did not accord with the number of symbols on the lines, and afterwards when the photograph of another tablet was substituted, the same story was continued without the change being discovered . . . . He explained at great length that the actual value and significance of the symbols had been forgotten, but the tablets were recognized by unmistakable features and the interpretation of them was beyond question."

Routledge (194, pp. 250-251) knew an old man on Easter Island named Tomenika who was said to have been acquainted with an inferior kind of *rongorongo* known as the *tau*. Her visits to this old man were limited, however, by the fact that he was old and leprous. At one interview Tomenika was given a pencil and sheet of paper on which he drew "three vertical lines first of noughts then of ticks." He gave a name to each line and proceeded to recite. "He obviously used the marks simply to keep count of the different phrases." On another occasion he designed rows of glyphs and recited as he had done before, "the signs taking the place of ticks; anything from three or four to ten words were said to each sign. If he made a variation when asked to repeat, it was transporting the order of two phrases; evidently the signs themselves were not to him, now at any rate, connected with particular words."

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Little if any credence can be attached to present-day information about the significance of the tablets. However, Charli Teao, nephew of Te Haha,

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formulated a theory which expresses ideas that could neither have been invented in modern times nor transmitted by European contacts. Charli Teao was convinced that each sign was connected with a special song of magical virtue. Thus, a person who wanted to impose his will on another had to take a tablet, look at a sign, and chant the appropriate formula. The combined power of the charm and of the drawing might even cause death. The tablet signs (*rona*) had the same mana as identical signs engraved on skulls or rocks. They could make people successful in any activity symbolized by a design (fishing, dancing). Modern natives have a superstitious fear of the tablets. I was told that three years ago a man called Beriberi found a fragment of tablet. Soon after several members of his family died; believing them bewitched by the tablet, he burned it.

Teao pretended that his uncle had taught him the symbolic value of certain signs. For instance, two birds lined together meant friendship, an octopus was a charm to cause death, and so on. For several reasons, I strongly distrust his interpretation, though perhaps he was right when he asserted that many signs represented gods. One of the most frequently repeated tablet signs shows the god Makemake.

The various attempts to decipher the tablets establish only one fact: the tablets were never read, but were used during chanting. Even now the natives pretend to know tablet chants. Had early European inquiries conceived the tablets as something other than an actual script they might have solved the problem of the Easter Island tablets with a few questions.

It is highly significant that all natives who were asked to interpret an individual sign explained what it represented and never gave it a phonetic value. Even if we assume that all the experts who were interrogated were only partially initiated into the science of writing, it is strange that no one tried to spell the signs. With only a glance at the tablet they started to chant. Even a little schooling would have taught them enough to spell a few letters or a few syllables if the signs had some phonetic value. Further evidence will show that the Easter Island symbols were not a script.

Many interpretations of the tablets have been given by scholars or amateurs who tried to solve the problem without the help of natives. A detailed review of the opinions formulated by these investigators is beyond the scope of this book, the more so since they have been summarized by Lehmann (139, pp. 261-264) and by Gusinde (93, pp. 333-337). On the other hand, it is advisable to refute a few errors which have become almost traditional.

Many interpreters regard the tablets as genealogical tables (Meinicke, 152, vol. 2, p. 234; Geiseler, 87, p. 27; Thomson, 215, p. 517; Meyer, 159; Gusinde, 93, p. 336; Haberlandt, 97, pp. 97-100). This is purely hypothetical and unsupported by tradition or native statement. No Polynesian people has lists of ancestors which require 1,600 signs to record. It may be argued that several descent lines are included in one tablet or that information

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852 completely clear to me if these small gifts had to be cooked in a pit oven, or *umu*,
[431] or whether they were simply cooked food brought to this celebration, though I am inclined to feel that, considering the first ceremonial *umu*, they were probably especially prepared in a pit oven.

177 According to Jorge and Roberto, this ceremony is occasionally still performed
431 as above but is gradually being supplanted by a modified version. This new pattern
852 is best described by Jorge's plans for the celebration of a forthcoming first birth in the family of one of his recently married sons. Jorge explained that, upon the birth of the child, he would make a "table" of gifts for his son's father-in-law, and the father-in-law, in turn, would make a gift table for Jorge. These they would exchange at a party, and the exchanged gifts would then be distributed among the
[574] relatives of each father-in-law. The party, rather than being the traditional *umu*, would be a time when a little wine or liquor was served to the guests, and all would sing and dance during the evening. Whether or not Jorge would prepare the small *umu* for the first eating by the new mother could not be learned. Considering,
● [114] however, that the Easter Islanders would feel that Chileans, and therefore all foreigners, would ridicule such a rite as superstitious, it is possible that Jorge's diffidence on the matter actually reflected a plan to carry out such a ritual, the fear of overt or covert ridicule on my part, however, forbidding his admitting it.

858 Although the sex of the first born does not appear to change the initial *umu* ceremony, there is ample evidence that the first born boy, whether or not he is the first child, not only stands in a special relationship to his father but to the powers of the supernatural world as well. From the day of his birth he is seen as being in a "very delicate" situation, to the extent that he is more easily subject to death than are his sisters and later born brothers. Owing to this situation he is treated in a special manner, is continually watched over, and is never allowed to go near such dangerous places as a rough beach or a high cliff. This delicate situation may continue for many years and can only be dissipated, and then completely, upon the death of one of his brothers. Thus, the death of any one of the brothers (of a first born son) liberates the earliest born forever from his close companionship with death, and he is henceforth allowed to travel at will and carries no restrictions, except where his father is concerned.

593 Throughout life the first born son and his father must carefully observe certain
784 taboos in relation to one another. Neither, for example, may cut the other's hair,
858 for to do so would bring bad luck to the one whose hair was cut. Should the father get sick, the son must not approach him, since to do this would cause the father's death. The reverse is true in the event of illness befalling the first born son. No such taboos appear to hold for the parent-sib relationship of the other children of the family. This special relationship of the father and his first born son was de-

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177 ties from the island's administrators that its incidence in the past few years is said
586 to have dropped noticeably.
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It is in the matter of death and burial ritual that the church has shown a
177 strong influence amounting to almost complete substitution of foreign for indig-
764 enous custom. However, the ancient feast formerly held on the day of death con-
799 tinues to be celebrated, along with the enforcement of certain eating taboos on the members of the deceased's family. The only influence the church has had on this celebration is to change its time to the day of burial. Whereas most of the natives are now seemingly content to have their deceased relatives go through the church ritual and be buried in the Catholic cemetery, I gathered a number of contemporary accounts of elderly men who, becoming ill, have gone to a secret cave to die. During our visit one old man became sick and disappeared from the village for almost two weeks. Since he worked for the sheep ranch, the administration attempted to find out where he had gone and what had happened to him. Considerable questioning brought forth the same answer, that the old man believed he was about to die and had probably gone to his secret cave.[8] In time he returned, well and healthy, but remained completely vague as to where he had been during his absence. As for the burial of the dead in ancient *ahus*, a secretly practiced custom in 1880,[9] I could learn nothing and, from all indications, this practice has ceased.

177 Beside the government's influence in lowering the incidence of divorce, it has
844 been responsible in no small degree for a certain amount of change in the early
[646] sector of the life cycle. Thus, with the presence of a Naval-controlled hospital, doctor, and midwife, it must be presumed that much of the ancient practice surrounding the delivery of a baby, including the method of tying and severing the umbilical cord, has given way to more modern medical practices. However, it is
114 interesting to note that the early custom of smearing red ochre into the umbilical
177 wound continues up to the present time, along with the ceremonial *umu* given by
852 the father's family to that of the mother, and at which time the mother must still eat the first food.[10] In this connection it should be noted that, while Métraux refers to this *umu* as a feast, my own informants seemed to regard it more as a
[178] ceremonial partaking of food.[11] That such may be the case is further strengthened by their description of an immediately following feast for friends and relatives in celebration of the first born child. The latter is not recorded by Métraux and

8 For an unsuccessful attempt at self-interment in a secret cave in 1922, see P. Sebastián Englert, *La Tierra de Hotu Matu'a* (Santiago, 1948), p. 52.

9 Métraux, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

10 *Idem*, pp. 102-103.

11 *Idem*, p. 103.

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may constitute an innovation. However, it is so typically Repa-nui in character, even including the interchange of food by the two families involved, that, if it is not old, it certainly represents a change from within the indigenous cultural pattern. That this feast is now breaking down and being supplanted by a European-like party is indicated by Jorge Tepano's plans for the celebration of the birth of a first child to one of his sons. However, the exchange feature continues, although gifts other than food are now beginning to be used.

Of perhaps greater significance is the change being wrought by the local government school, not only via the forced introduction of Spanish, mathematics, and the like, but, indirectly, on the life habits of the adolescent. Not only are the initiation rites of puberty no longer carried out — nor have they been for some time — but the ancient attitude that young men up to the age of marriage should devote their time to pleasurable living has undergone a noticeable modification. It is possible that in this we have an influence from Chile, in that on the continent, which natives have been allowed to visit from time to time, a boy completes his education and goes to work. Although the age for such activity in Chile may be a bit later than on Easter Island, owing to more extensive education, the fact that the island's schooling is completed for a boy at age thirteen may account for the islander's new attitude that this period marks the beginning of work for their youth.

Having noted some of the more important acculturation changes in the life cycle of the Easter Islander, we may now turn briefly to some of the correspondences with ancient custom as determined from Métraux's attempted reconstruction of the culture of the past.

Although the *umu* feast on the third or fifth month of pregnancy appears to have been dropped, the *umu* at the birth of a first child, with its rite of first food for the mother, continues.[12] Whereas the adolescent no longer goes through a puberty rite, and must now engage in a certain amount of work, his earlier freedom of sex life continues unabated. Marriage, including the gift exchange and marriage feast, continues substantially as Métraux described it for the past,[13] except for the inclusion of church ritual and an unexplained, though minor, change in the manner of exhibiting the exchanged gifts. Here Métraux describes a conical framework of poles upon which the items were exhibited, while during my stay on the island I heard numerous references to the gifts being displayed in such a way that they formed a boat.[14]

Of special interest is the continued existence of the *tumu* grouping of lineages,

12 *Idem*, pp. 101, 103.
13 *Idem*, p. 111.
14 *Loc. cit.*

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178 and the *koro* feast which Métraux believed to have probably died out.[15] Our description is that of the *koro* given by a man to his father-in-law which took place in Hangaroa in February, 1956. In the matter of divorce we have noted that there is now a tendency to follow Chilean legal procedure, though simple separation following the ancient pattern continues to exist. In the matter of death and burial a few old men would appear to still hold out for non-Christian interment by the expedient of going to secret caves when they believe they are about to die.

Narrow as this study has been in terms of the total culture pattern of the Easter [114] Islanders, it tends to reveal that far more of the ancient social customs continue to exist than was previously thought by Métraux and others.[16] How much more [648] of the old culture may yet survive is difficult to say, for the Rapa-nui is sensitive to the criticism and derision of his Chilean administrators who have tended to look upon most of his customs as child-like and foolish. The result has been a tendency on the part of the islander to publicly depreciate the role that ancient customs play in his life.

Museum of New Mexico
Santa Fe, New Mexico

15 *Idem*, p. 348.

16 *Idem*, p. 97.

3:Drapkin D-5 (1934-1935) 1935
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Provincial Director of Public Instruction, Valparaiso. It is entirely due to these circumstances that there is a large number of illiterates among the Easter Islanders, in spite of their remarkable intelligence and their extremely keen desire for education.

Easter Islanders, in the manner of most of the Polynesians, are of an open, observing nature, having extraordinary faculties for assimilation. They are constantly on the watch for every new bit of knoweldge and adopt with a veritable passion every innovation, material or intellectual. Individuals of exceptional talent should have special advantages. Their present condition does not favor them at all in this respect.

Because Easter Island belongs to Chile, the official language is Spanish, naturally. Up to the present the Chilean influence consists only of the presence of a Commissioner whose functions include those of Civil Registration Officer and Schoolmaster. Therefore it is not surprising that most of the natives, if they understand Spanish, do not speak it except very badly. Only a small group of individuals are capable of more or less correct expression in this language. The women are even more conservative in their language and traditions; there are few who can carry on a conversation in Spanish.

We shall consider as illiterate all natives who do not read or write any language, for quite a number among them read and write the Easter Island language or Tahitian. Without counting the children under 10, of whom there are 183, there are actually 147 illiterates, that is to say 53.85 percent. One hundred and twenty-six, or 46.15 percent, read and write.

VITAL STATISTICS

It would be necessary, in order to complete this brief contribution to the demography of Easter Island, to give statistics for births, mortality, marriage, sanitary conditions, etc. Unfortunately, various circumstances have made this task impossible. The bureau of civil registry, installed at Hanga Roa in 1915, has been neglected. Also no official census of the population has been made until now. In addition, the island is without doctors who could have studied the sanitary conditions and the causes of death. To complete the difficulty, one series of the records of the civil registry has disappeared.

3:Drapkin D-5 (1934-1935) 1935
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To satisfy my conscience I shall however publish a few facts that I have been able to gather together. [114] 163 165

During 17 years, that is to say from 1915 to 1931 inclusive, the percentage of births each year was as follows:

Legitimate	
Male	7
Female	6
Illegitimate	
Male	3
Female	2
Total	**18 per year (10 male and 8 female)**

The percentage of marriages during 13 years has been three each year (from 1919 to 1931 inclusive). The mortality, during this same period of time, averages 10 each year, 4 children and 6 adults. As to the causes of death and sicknesses in general I can say nothing, for the reasons above stated.

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
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had fallen, again emphasized their enigmatic relation to the lost civilization, of which the statues and great stone mausoleums as well as other finely wrought remains of the past were mute evidence.

Then scientists began to study Easter Island. At what time and by what manner of men, they asked, were these images made, with their colossal bulk, their empty eyes and scornful expressions? Was the island the remnant of a sunken continent? Had it been inhabited by a powerful earlier race which had died out, or been destroyed and displaced by more warlike conquerors? Had eruptions of the volcanoes exterminated the skilled craftsmen, the sculptors, and the architects, leaving only a small group of people too discouraged and weak to continue the work of their forefathers? These are among the questions that still puzzle students.

The statues symbolize the mystery of the island and have made it famous. Yet their paradoxical presence on this speck of land in the midst of the Pacific is perhaps less difficult to understand than are the wooden tablets covered with small incised designs that were collected from the natives in the second half of the last century. The tablets raised the fascinating question whether their makers used on them a kind of hieroglyphic script which might some day be deciphered and would unveil the secret of its past. But all attempts to decipher them, with the help of intelligent natives, failed.

A few years ago the study of the tablets took an unexpected turn. A Hungarian linguist, Guillaume de Hevesy, published a long list of Easter Island hieroglyphs which, it was claimed, presented very striking analogies with the symbols of a newly discovered script found in the ruins of a civilization, 5,000 years old, in the Indus Valley at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. There, coetaneous with the Sumerian civilization, flourished large and opulent cities inhabited by people whose name and affiliations are totally unknown to us. They were wiped out probably at the time of the Aryan, and their existence remained unsuspected until the great excavations of Sir John Marshall. The Mohenjo-daro people have left a great many inscriptions on seals which have so far resisted any attempt at decipherment. If it could be shown that the two scripts were related, new light might be thrown on the obscure past of the whole Pacific area.

The problem thus posed was of such significance for an understanding of the early history of man that the French Government in association with the Belgian Government decided to organize an expedition to Easter Island to try to read its riddle. The leader of the expedition was a French archeologist, Charles Watelin, who, unfortunately, died in Tierra del Fuego. I was then asked to carry on the research, in association with the Belgian archeologist, Dr. Henry Lavachery.

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
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mulberry, which the natives grew in special stone-enclosed plots. Perhaps the wood necessary for making sledges on which the statues might have been hauled was lumber that floated ashore. This is frequently mentioned in ancient tales. If native timber or driftwood was available in the old days, the difficulties of transportation would not have been overwhelming. We know that other Polynesians transported objects quite as heavy as the Easter Island images. For instance in the Marquesas, slabs weighing as much as 10 tons were hauled along the slopes of the mountains. The famous doorway, or trilithon, of Tonga, which is one of the marvels of the world, has a lintel weighing 30 tons. But when the Easter Islanders of today are asked about the means by which the statues were transported, they only say: "King Tuu-ko-ihu, the great magician, used to move them with the words of his mouth."

Other questions have arisen about the Easter Island carvings. How, for instance, did the people get the manpower for such large enterprises, which would have been impossible, it seems, if the population were as small as it is today? The answer is that before the Europeans arrived, the island had ten times as many inhabitants as it now has—4 or 5 thousand would be a conservative estimate. We know this from data given by its first European visitors and the early missionaries.

Again, are these statues as old as has been said? Certain writers have dated them as far back as 1000 B. C. There are even some who think that they might have been in existence 10,000 years ago. But the weight of general evidence is against these views. Although their material is a relatively soft stone, they still retain sharp outlines, and the hammer marks are still noticeable on them. As the winds blow with relentless force over the island, and rains are both frequent and violent, if the carving had been done thousands of years ago, it could not be in such good condition as it is today. Tradition seems to indicate that the Polynesian ancestors of the present inhabitants came to the island and settled it in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A. D. All things considered, I do not think the statues can be more than five or six centuries old. But no definite date can be set for them.

The figures of stone that stood so high above the shores of Easter Island, and in such striking formation that it is no wonder they amazed the old navigators, have attracted more attention than the other mysterious objects to which I have already referred—the wooden tablets with rows of strange signs incised on them. But these curious pieces of wood have also given rise to much speculation. They were bought from the natives by the missionaries in the early days of their work, and ever since they have been thought to contain a real script which, if it could be read, would prove a key to the island's mysteries.

The first white man to discover the tablets was Monseigneur Jaussen, French Bishop of Tahiti, in 1866. As he was looking at a piece of

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
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212 114 wood, wrapped around with strands of hair, which a missionary had brought from Easter Island as a gift from the natives to the head of their new church, he was puzzled by the rows of small designs he noticed on it. These he took to be hieroglyphs, and his view has been shared by all the later students of the problem. The so-called "hieroglyphs," cut in the wood with a shark's tooth, are realistic or conventionalized drawings of various subjects, including apparently geometrical figures. Many of them represent men, animals, plants, and other familiar forms reduced to their essential features with no unnecessary detail to blur the image. They run up and down the tablets in rows so arranged that when the reader arrives at the bottom of one row, he has to turn the tablet upside down to see the designs of the next one in a normal position. These images, or characters, are among the masterpieces of primitive graphic art that have come down to us. They are outlined with an exquisite grace. The symbols are uniform in style suggesting an established and highly developed aesthetic tradition.

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Unfortunately, the discovery of this remarkable work was not followed up by scientific inquiries at a time when they might have borne fruit. When, finally, in 1914 Mrs. Katherine Routledge, the distinguished English anthropologist, tried to obtain a key to its meaning from the last native who had been trained in the old chanters' school, it was already too late. He died of leprosy a few days after his first interview with her. The modern natives know nothing of the matter. They tell merely vague tales of the tablets, saying that they are magical objects which have the power to cause death.

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The supposed substance of the rows of designs on some of the tablets was dictated in the Easter Island dialect to Jaussen by a native named Metoro. But when Metoro's words were translated it appeared that they were only a simple description of the designs, not their actual content, as had been hoped.

Other attempts at interpretation have been undertaken but with even less success. The most serious was that of an American naval officer, W. J. Thomson. In 1886 he tried to obtain the text of what was inscribed on the tablets from an elderly native. This man undoubtedly had some knowledge of the characters, but he had become a good Christian and was afraid of jeopardizing his chances in another world by touching the tablets or even looking at their pagan symbols. In order to resist the temptation, he ran away and hid in a cave, where Thomson finally captured him. There he was "stimulated" by flattery and a few drinks to what was thought to be a revelation of these secrets of the past. At any rate, he began to chant old Polynesian hymns, which he said were the texts of the tablets. Thomson and his colleagues noticed, however, that their informant was paying no atten-

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
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tion to the rows of designs as he chanted and did not repeat his words when the same tablet was put into his hands a second time. He was, therefore, thought to be a fraud and was dismissed.

As I have already said, a definite clue to the enigma of this so-called "script" seemed at last to have been discovered 7 years ago, when Mr. de Hevesy pointed out a series of analogies between some of these Easter Island designs and those of an old Asiatic script found on stone and clay seals in the ruins of two forgotten cities, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, in the valley of the Indus. Now, archeologists agree in thinking that the civilization of the Indus region dates from about 3000 B. C. Its people were an unknown race that knew how to build planned cities with a complicated sewerage system. The script they used is still undeciphered, but hypotheses about it have been advanced which, if substantiated, would make it one of the earliest known forms of man's writing. Some Orientalists see striking analogies between this Mohenjo-daro script and the early Chinese hieroglyphs.

Although the relationship between Easter Island "script" and that of the Indus has been accepted widely as a demonstrated fact, I cannot help being skeptical for several reasons. The Indus civilization, contemporaneous with that of Sumeria and Egypt, was extinct by 2000 B. C. Easter Island culture died out only 80 years ago. Roughly 15,000 miles of land and sea separate the Indus Valley from the island. Between them lie India, Indonesia, and enormous wastes of water. In other respects Mohenjo-daro and Easter Island have nothing in common: the arts of the Indus, like weaving, pottery, and metal working, were unknown to the remote islanders. The proud city dwellers of Mohenjo-daro would have looked down upon the half-naked people who lived in thatched huts, and indulged in cannibalism. How could two such different and widely separated peoples have shared the same form of writing?

In order to answer this question, Mr. de Hevesy advanced the theory that the Easter Island tablets are many centuries, if not millenniums, old and were brought to Easter Island by the first immigrants. Here the evidence that remains is against him. The wood of the best and largest Easter Island tablet is that of a European oar. Besides, if Hevesy's theory were to be accepted we should have to make the difficult assumption that the Easter Islanders kept their script unchanged for more than 5,000 years. A careful analysis of the tablets and the Indus script has not borne out this theory. True, some of the signs in the Indus script have striking analogies with those of Easter Island. I am, nevertheless, still more impressed by the divergencies, and by the doubtfulness of parallels based only on a few cases which take no account of many variants of the same design.

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
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212 114 Moreover, there is little question, I believe, that the designs on the tablets were created by natives of Easter Island. It would be difficult to explain on any other assumption the presence among them of so many figures of animals belonging to the local fauna and of objects that are found, as far as is known, in its culture only. Mr. de Hevesy interpreted certain of the Easter Island symbols as representations of monkeys and elephants, but for these suggestions of India's jungle life he drew on his imagination.

212 In the hope of throwing some light on the mystery, I applied to several tablets an analytical method. I counted their symbols and studied their combinations to find out whether they might constitute an actual script. If the symbols represented sounds, the same signs would have been combined in the same order whenever a word was repeated. But this seldom happens. The same combinations of the same symbols recur in only a very few cases. The individual designs are repeated over and over again but apparently in haphazard order. No clue to a script came from this study.

If we might assume that the tablets contain an actual script, the question would arise whether it were pictographic or ideographic. To answer this there are not enough different symbols. Most of them are variants of about a hundred fundamental designs. On certain tablets the same signs form a high percentage of the total.

Assuming that the Easter Island tablets contained a script, I thought it likely for a long time that this was based on the same principle as the designs inscribed on birchbark by the Ojibway Indians, who record charms by means of figures which sometimes remind us of the Easter Island symbols. From the images drawn on bark, the Indian shaman reads a text which, to his mind, they represent. The Cuna Indians of Panama still use the same primitive form of writing.

But one thing made me suspicious of such an interpretation. The Easter Island tablets are pieces of wood of various odd shapes which are always covered with designs from one end to the other and on both sides. If their contents corresponded to a script text, this would mean that the artist always knew in advance just the size and shape of the piece of wood his chant would fill. As this seemed highly improbable, I was obliged to abandon this entire hypothesis and seek for some better clue to the mystery.

212 533 I found it in a link that has been kept between the tablets and the oral traditions, songs, and prayers of the Easter Islanders. The very word that the natives use for the tablets puts us on the right track.

They are called *kohau rongorongo*, which means literally "orator staff"—that is, the stick, sometimes decorated with carved symbols, sometimes not—which a speaker holds in his hands while making a public address or reciting a piece of traditional lore, as if to give added significance to his words. The *rongorongo* were professional chanters

4:Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
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who formed a society, which existed not only on Easter Island but also on other Polynesian islands. In childhood they were taught in special schools to memorize and to recite the lore of their tribe. 212 533

Everywhere in Polynesia the chanters use such an "orator staff." Sometimes, as in New Zealand, the staffs are provided with notches, which are supposed to help in reciting genealogical tables. In the Marquesas, the chanters held, while chanting, a bundle made of string wound about with knotted ends hanging down, which was thought of as containing the substance of the chant though the connection between the words and the contents of the bundle was loose. The bundles symbolized the chants and were in consequence of paramount importance. They were solemnly given to the young people after they had been initiated into the lore of their ancestors. 212 533 171

These facts, I concluded, give us the best clue in the problem of the Easter Island tablets. To its chanters as to the chanters of other islands, the "orator staffs" were the accessories and the symbols of their function. Originally, the designs on the staffs or tablets might have been mnemonic, but later on they lost their exact significance in the minds of the natives and were looked upon merely as simple ornaments or magic symbols. It may be added that even now we can observe on Easter Island a slight relation that has been preserved between design and chant. The natives are in the habit of chanting when they make string figures or cat's cradles. This interpretation of the tablets may not contain the whole truth about them. I offer it rather as the hypothesis which best fits the facts available today, and which harmonizes also with what we know of an underlying tendency in Polynesian civilization. 212 533

But these are not all the questions that have been raised by Easter Island. Some observers have found in the well-carved and well-fitted stones of its sanctuaries likenesses and relations to the ancient remains in Peru, and to account for them have said that there must have been intercourse between these two parts of the world at some period of history. But close study has revealed that between the Peruvian and the island ruins the resemblances do not go beyond the general fact of an exact fitting of the stones. The plan and the structure of the Peruvian buildings are entirely different. In Peru the walls are all of carved stone blocks, whereas in Easter Island they consist of slabs set on edge outside with rubble behind. The only conspicuous architectural achievement of the Easter Islanders was to select the slabs and to dress their corners so that no gap would appear on the surface and impair the general appearance. This they could naturally have learned to do without crossing the Pacific in frail canoes and making the long journey inland to the site of the wonderful ruins in Peru. Moreover, these are certainly far older than the Easter Island sanctuaries. Thus it seems clear that we must 172 114 [342 333]

-4: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1945
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give up hope that the remains on Easter Island will help to solve the problems of early American civilizations.

The result of 3 years' work on the island culture pursued at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, with which I have been associated, shows that this Ultima Thule was discovered and settled by Polynesians, who arrived in a fleet of double canoes sometime, roughly, between the middle of the twelfth century A. D. and the end of the thirteenth. The time of the discovery and settlement can be established approximately from the lists of chiefs that have come to us. These the early missionaries took down from the dictation of the natives. I was permitted to copy another one from a list which my native informant had compiled himself. Many errors have, of course, slipped into these records, but a comparative study of them shows that Easter Island has been ruled by about 25 or 30 chiefs since the founder of the dynasty, Hotu-matua, and his people first came to its shores. Allowing 25 years for each ruler's reign—the usual method of measuring time in Polynesian annals—we find that this must have happened very close to the twelfth or thirteenth century. From other sources, we know also that this was a period of great sea expeditions, and that the settling of New Zealand and of many other islands in the Pacific occurred in what seems to have been a heroic age of ancient Polynesia.

Curiously enough, the oral tradition of the migration to Easter Island has been preserved remarkably well even down to the present. While I was there, I was told in great detail many more or less legendary incidents of the voyage eastward of Hotu-matua and his associate, the noble Tuuko-ihu. These stories with their core of history were the glorious sagas of the first emigrants to this little lost world.

At about the same time, the Tahitians, Maori, and Marquesans had a culture which was still undefined but was very similar in the different groups. In the course of the succeeding centuries, over each of these island areas a civilization developed along original lines, though still retaining the common background. The Easter Island culture belongs to this purely Polynesian type. The ancestors of the present population merely improved upon the legacy they received.

Where then did the Easter Islanders come from? Since they are Polynesians in race, language, and culture, the problem of their origin coincides with that of the Polynesians as a whole and is as yet unsolved. That the Polynesians came from Asia is beyond doubt. India, Assam, and Indo-China have been variously given as the cradle of these seafaring tribes, but sufficient evidence to validate these theories is still lacking. Within the Polynesian world the Easter Islanders offer many analogies with the Maori of New Zealand, the people of Mangareva and those of the Marquesas. Actually the resemblances between Easter Island culture and that of the Marquesas are very striking. It

5: Roggeveen T-5 (1721-1722)1908
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EXTRACT FROM THE OFFICIAL LOG OF MR JACOB ROGGEVEEN; RELATING TO HIS DISCOVERY OF EASTER ISLAND.

LOG, relating to the voyage to the unknown portion of the World, lying in the South-Sea to the westward of America, done and kept by Mr JACOB ROGGEVEEN, as Commander in Chief of the three Ships *THE AREND*, whose Captain is JAN KOSTER, mounted with 32 pieces of Cannon, manned with 110 Persons, and 120 feet in length: the Ship *THIENHOVEN*, commanded by Cap^n. CORNELIS BOUMAN, being mounted with 24 pieces of Cannon, 80 Persons, and 100 feet in length: together with the Ship *DE AFRIKAANSCHE GALEY*, having [*sic*] pieces of Cannon, 33 men, and 92 feet long, each one being victualled for 28 months, all equipped and fitted out by the Amsterdam Chamber, in pursuance of a Resolution of the Honourable the Directors of the Netherlands chartered West-India Company, adopted at a Meeting of their Board held at The Hague on the 10th of April, *Anno* 1721.

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April.

1. Found ourselves at noon in 26 degrees 56 minutes South latitude, and in the longitude by reckoning of 268 degrees 45 minutes, the course was West, the wind East-

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[p. 3]

5: Roggeveen T-5 (1721-1722)1908
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our hope that a good discovery of a high and wide-stretching tract of land should result after a little while.

[*End of the Extract from Roggeveen's Journal.*]

NOTE.

(*By the Editor.*)

The explorers' wish was destined to be disappointed; and the subsequent pages of the Journal contain nothing pertinent to the present subject. No land was sighted on the course due West, along the parallel of Easter Island; and, on the 21st of April, Roggeveen called another meeting of his officers, including this time in their deliberations the Chief Pilots. He concluded that Easter Island must be identical with the so-called Southern Continent of Davis, Wafer, and Dampier, and that the "range of high land" they were now in search of must be visionary. In finally reviewing the *pros* and *cons* of their statements the phlegmatic Dutchman slyly declares that "nothing more remains to be said than that these three (who were Englishmen) must have been rovers from truth, as well as rovers after the goods of the Spaniards."

Such is the official account written by Mr Jacob Roggeveen, the Commodore of his expedition—an account which, little known as it appears to be even at the present day, should long since have relegated the clap-trap story of the *Tweejarige Reize* to the realms of legend, and have eclipsed the claims of the more sober-minded but not wholly authentic narrative of Sergeant-Major Carl Friederich Behrens. We may now judge Roggeveen in a new and true light; and must commend his conduct of the expedition as careful and conscientious, instead of loading him, as has been done in the past, with charges of

5: Roggeveen T-5 (1721-1722)1908
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114 inhumanity and ruthlessness. Honour is due to him as the first European to visit and explore Easter Island; and as having succeeded in that object with fewer *data* available than had many of his successors, who nevertheless failed in the quest.

B. G. C.

6: Anonymous T-5 (1770)1908
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JOURNAL

of the principal occurrences during the voyage of the Frigate *Santa Rosalia*, under the command of Captain Don Antonio Domonte, which sailed from the Port of the Callao on the 10th of October, 1770, in company with the ship of the line *San Lorenzo*, Commodore don Felipe Gonzalez; to find and examine the Island of David, and others in the South Seas, her chief pilot being don Francisco Antonio de Agüera Infanzon[1].

On Wednesday, the 10th of OCTOBER, 1770, at half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, we put to sea with a fresh breeze from S.S.E., making all sail in order to join company with the Commodore, which we succeeded in doing at sun-down: the north-western headland of the island of San Lorenzo of the Callao bearing then S., 5° S.E., distant ¾ of a league, and at eight o'clock from 2½ to 3 leagues off on the same bearing.

From this point I took my departure, fixing as my base the latitude of 12° 5′, and longitude 298° 45′, meridian of Teneriffe. We set our course to the S.W. with the wind fresh from S.S.E.

Thursday, 11th. I could get no observation at noon: by my reckoning I was in lat. 12° 29′, and long. 297° 45′. Course 68°, 3rd quadrant. Distance 63½ miles. The winds were fresh, from the 2nd quadrant.

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[1] Two officially attested copies of the original of this Journal exist in the library of the *Real Academia de la Historia* at Madrid, both made by Royal Command in 1778. The original itself was deposited in the Archives of the *Despacho Universal de Indias*—the Colonial Office of Spain.

There is also a copy, on paper and in handwriting of the same period, in the British Museum [Eg. 902: n° 3, f. 53]. *Vide* also p. lxiii.

[p. 85]

7: Anonymous T-5 (1770)1908
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

the cotton plant would yield, as the country is very temperate: and wheat, garden plants, pot-herbs, &c. They dye their cloaks yellow.

The number of the inhabitants, including both sexes, will be from about nine hundred to a thousand souls: and of these very few indeed are women,—I do not believe they amount to seventy—and but few boys. They are in hue like a quadroon, with smooth hair and short beards, and they in no way resemble the Indians of the South American continent; and if they wore clothing like ourselves they might very well pass for Europeans. They eat very little, and have few needs: they do altogether without liquor of any kind.

On the 21st at noon we put to sea from this Island of David: we sailed some 70 leagues to the Westward to see whether any more land lay in that direction.

On the 23rd we hauled to the Southward until we reached the lat. 38° 30′ and long. 263° 31′, where we arrived on the 29th. On this track, on the 24th, in lat. 29° 30′, long. 261° 30′ at 6 in the afternoon, we saw ten or twelve white birds, and terns, and again some godwits, an indication of some island. The Commodore decided not to search for it at this juncture, deeming that the time was already short for going to Chiloe, and intending to look for it on the return voyage as the latitude was one in which the quest might be pursued at any season of the year.

From the longitude of 263° 31′ we stood away East as far as 281° along the parallel of 38½°, without meeting with any sign; and from that position we proceeded to Chiloe.

[Here this Journal ends; but a note is appended to it in one of the two MS. copies at the Academy of History, to the following effect:—

"This is a copy of the one which the aged Captain and Pilot of these seas, Don Domingo Josef Vasqués, had in

7: Anonymous T-5 (1770)1908
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114 his keeping, on old paper, in a very small French-looking handwriting, and in grey ink. The narrative agrees entirely with another in a different handwriting, written four years after the exploration of the island, which was in the possession of Don Bartholomé de la Parra, a very old resident in this city, with the difference that Parra's copy concludes by saying, "This information relates to the Island of David (now called after San Carlos) which lies in lat. S. 27° 06′ and in long. 264° 20′ from the meridian of Tenerife. On board the frigate *Nra. Sra. de la Soledad*, 26th of August, 1774."—It agrees with the plan of the said island which I got more than 30 years ago, drawn during the expedition, and which we forwarded to the Hydrographic Office by H.M. ship *Asia* in January, 1815. And although the author is not made known in either of them, their contents correspond in substance with that which the above-mentioned Don Domingo José Vazqués informed me had been written by Lieut. Don Juan Hervé, the senior navigating officer of the *San Lorenzo*.

Lima, 7 December, 1815,

Baleato."

The other copy at the Academy of History was made at San Fernando on October 21st, 1824, by Raphael Maestre, and is bound up in the same volume.]

10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
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TE PITO' TE HENUA, KNOWN AS RAPA NUI; COMMONLY CALLED EASTER ISLAND, SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN. LATITUDE 27° 10′ S.; LONGITUDE 109° 26′ W.

By George H. Cooke,
Surgeon, United States Navy.

INTRODUCTION.

The U. S. S. *Mohican* sailed from the port of Callao, Peru, March 6, 1868, under orders for a protracted cruise, on special duty, among the islands of the South Pacific, with instructions, on her return passage to the South American coast, to call at Easter Island, make certain investigations desired by the Smithsonian Institution, and especially to bring away one of the colossal stone images to be found upon the island.

After a passage of thirty-two days the Marquesas group was reached, but the authorities, wishing to impose quarantine upon the ship, a stay of a few hours only was made, and we pushed on to the island of Rairoa, in the Tuamotu, or Low Archipelago. From thence the ship visited, at various times, and in some instances repeatedly, the Society Islands, the Samoan Group, the Tonga Group, the Fiji Islands, and New Zealand, and took her final departure from Tahiti for Easter Island and the South American coast November 16, dropping anchor in Hanga Roa Bay, west coast Rapa Nui, December 18.

The stone image, stone crown, and stone head, for the Smithsonian Institution, having been successfully transported over the island to the beach and thence transferred on board, the ship sailed on the last day of the year for Valparaiso, Chile, arriving at the latter port January 14, 1887, having performed the duty assigned her, in which all on board took the liveliest interest.

The writer has confined himself, as strictly as circumstances would admit, to the line of investigation assigned him, in order that there might not be a needless repetition in the reports of the several officers concerned in the work.

In the preparation and collation of the glossary the writer has been ably assisted by Lieut. William E. Safford, U. S. N.

[p. 690 blank]

10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
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EXPEDITION AROUND THE COAST LINE.

114 The investigations upon which this report is based cover a period of twelve days, from December 19 to December 30, 1886, inclusive, and were conducted in association with two other officers (the paymaster and the navigator) of the ship, to whom, as to the writer, special duties, predicated upon the information desired by the Smithsonian Institution, were assigned, respectively.

123 The *Mohican* anchored in the roadstead of the Hanga Roa, Rapa Nui, in the forenoon of Saturday, December 18, and on the morning of the 19th the writer proceeded ashore and immediately began his duties. On that day the crater of Rana Kao was visited and a general inspection was made of the stone huts, the painted slabs in their interior, the sculptured rocks, etc., and of the crater itself, in the immediate vicinity of which these objects of interest are located. At 3 o'clock p. m. the party returned to the house of Mr. John Brander, near the base of the volcano, from which we had taken our departure in the morning, and toward evening, mounting a wagon, were driven to the residence of Mr. Alexander P. Salmon at Vaihu, distant 5 miles, on the southeast coast of the island and formerly a Catholic mission.

At an early hour on Monday morning, December 20, we were driven back to the house of Mr. Brander, obtaining a view of the Obsidian Mountain as we skirted its base, and shortly after ascended Rana Kao, accompanied by a detail of men from the ship, with the necessary implements and instruments for making excavations and surveying. Private Anton Ayasse, of the marine guard of the ship, a clever draftsman, also accompanied the party for the purpose of making sketches of objects of interest.

The entire day was passed upon the mountain and a large amount of work performed, in the way of exploring the stone houses, inspecting the sculptured rocks in the vicinity, excavating, etc. Toward evening the descent was made and the night was passed at the house of Mr. Brander with somewhat more of comfort than had attended the previous one.

On the following morning, Tuesday, December 21, early preparations were made for the expedition around the entire coast line of the island. Four native men, named Huki, Luka, Haie, and Brotto, were engaged as guides and general utility men, with two pack horses for carrying camp equipage and provisions. Nine men, including the chief quartermaster of the ship, a boatswain's mate, and private Ayasse as draftsman, were detailed to accompany the party with tools for excavating, etc. The paymaster and navigator, with the writer and a naval cadet as assistant to the navigator, comprised the officers, and a young American, Mr. Frank Allen, in the employ of Mr. Salmon, went along as interpreter.

All being ready, the party started from the house of Mr. Brander at

11: Lavachery A-5 (1934-1935) 1937
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

EASTER ISLAND, POLYNESIA[1]

By HENRI LAVACHERY[2]
Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels

[With 4 plates]

Few places in the world have given rise to more fantastic speculation than this volcanic island, 70 square miles in area, lying in the Pacific Ocean, lat. 27°10′ S., long. 109°20′ W. Actually the so-called "mysteries of Easter Island", or rather the explanations which have been offered, are not the work of trained men of science. It is natural that the huge statues, standing erect as they do in a naked landscape against a background of black and yellow, should have appealed to the poetic imagination. But those who wish to face with candor the problems presented by certain parts of the world may well be annoyed when the poets' lyrical love of mystery becomes the starting point of speculation. The best students of Easter Island have always told us that it was Polynesian and could only be explained by Polynesia.[3] The evidence that we have now obtained is merely an addition to what was already a formidable pile. Nevertheless we expect that before long others will come forward again with tales of a lost continent of Lemuria, submerged beneath the waters of the Pacific; and that Easter Island is one of its peaks, peopled with Lemurian idols!

For geologists are in complete agreement upon this point. If a Pacific continent existed, it was long before the advent of man and

[1] Reprinted by permission, with some changes in the illustrations, from Antiquity, vol. 10, no. 37, March 1936.

[2] Dr. Henri Lavachery, the writer of this article, was the Belgian member of the Franco-Belgian Expedition which visited Easter Island and remained there from July 29, 1934, to Jan. 3, 1935. It was initiated by Prof. Paul Rivet, of the Ethnographical Museum, Paris, and was actually two expeditions—a French one conducted by M. Watelin (who died before reaching Easter Island) and Dr. A. Métraux (of Swiss nationality), and the Belgian expedition represented by Dr. Lavachery. A joint subsidy was made by the Belgian Government and the National Belgian Fund for Scientific Research. The expedition was transported to the island by a French naval vessel and taken off it by the Belgian training ship *Mercator*. The visit of the expedition and the formation of its collections were both greatly facilitated by the Government of Chile, to which Easter Island belongs, who gave the most generous instructions to their representative on the island. After the death of M. Watelin, M. Lavachery assumed responsibility for the archeological work, while M. Métraux had charge of the ethnographical and linguistic investigations. A report on the results of the expedition was published in the Bulletin des Musées Royaux, Bruxelles, May–June 1935, no. 3, pp. 80–93; July–August, 1935, no. 4, pp. 81–99.

[3] Routledge, Mrs. Scoresby, Mystery of Easter Island, 1919.

11: Lavachery A-5 (1934-1935)1937
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in a part of the southern ocean far removed from that in which the gaunt cliffs of Easter Island confront the unceasing assault of the waves. It is surrounded by vast ocean depths which occur in the expanse of 2,500 miles of ocean separating the island from the American coast on the east and from the nearest land 1,750 miles to the west, namely the Gambier Islands. Easter Island is a volcanic island, and a lofty one, like the Marquesas and Hawaii, in contrast with atolls and coral islands which are low-lying. If one could denude such islands of their dense coverlet of mango-scrub, breadfruit trees, bamboo and cocoa palms, drain the springs, and cover them with a growth of yellow herbage—then such an islet as Hivaoa of the Marquesas will come to resemble Easter Island.

It is the bareness of Easter Island, the result of its colder climate and exposure to the four winds of heaven, which has given birth to these misconceptions. The idea of Polynesia does not fall in with a barren rocky landscape, monotonous pampa, or a pale sun incessantly obscured by rain-clouds.

These talkative Pascuans,[4] like naughty laughing children, whose language and appearance is Polynesian without a shadow of doubt, can no longer be denied those ancestors who carved the notorious statutes, engraved the puzzling symbols of *rongorongo* and set up round the island's coast all those innumerable monuments (actually 184).

At what date was Easter Island first settled? There are excellent reasons for believing that it was between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the Christian era. We have certain traditions relating to the peopling of Hawaii and New Zealand. The Polynesians established themselves there at the end of their migrations between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Considering the remoteness of Easter Island, it is reasonable to suppose that it was peopled about the same time. The approximate date of the colonization of this island is, however, based upon the list of the Pascuan kings. This list has been narrated to several observers; the most complete is that of Thompson[5] who obtained it from an informant who was a survivor of the pagan period. One may assume a length of 12 years for the reigns of each of the 57 kings in the list. Maurata, the last Pascuan who was certainly regarded as a king, died in 1864, as a result of the Peruvian slave raids. Calculation gives us exactly the beginning of the thirteenth century.

[4] We may well adopt the English equivalent to avoid the clumsy "Easter Islanders."—Translator.

[5] A paymaster of the American Navy, and the author of a short archeological account which, considering that it was based merely upon a visit of 8 days, is remarkably informative and full. (Rep. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1889, pp. 447–552, 1891.)

13: Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1917
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114 EASTER ISLAND in the South-East Pacific, remained in
115 its primitive state, save in so far as it was affected by the visits of passing ships, till the year 1863. At that date a large number of its most distinguished inhabitants were carried away by Peruvian slave raiders or died from a subsequent epidemic of small-pox; the following year the first Christian missionary settled on the island; he was rapidly followed by a series of European exploiters and
114 the old order passed. The information which follows
115 was obtained from the few surviving natives who can remember their life in its earlier condition prior to the above events. It is never easy to procure from uneducated persons a straightforward and accurate statement, even when the events in question are recent and well within their knowledge, it is even harder when some of the facts are forgotten or only vaguely remembered, so that a speaker glides almost unconsciously from what is known to what is merely conjectured; the difficulty of research was in this case further augmented through its being begun with preconceived ideas, obtained from the brief allusions of earlier writers, which subsequently proved to be erroneous. The work was necessarily a matter of time; it was not, for instance, till the Expedition had been a year on the island that the story transpired of the bird-man's residence on Rano Raraku, though once heard it was found to be well known. The whole material available has not yet been examined and some changes may be necessary; what is claimed is that the evidence was very carefully obtained and weighed and that the story as given is believed to be substantially correct; but experience in field work here and elsewhere has induced a firm conviction that accuracy in anthropological work is never more than a comparative term. The account will be given first in general terms, and deviations or exceptions subsequently noted. With regard to the evidence at our disposal, information was obtained from

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some twelve different authorities, of whom four had been bird-men, three had served as "hopu," and one had acted in both capacities. We had camps at both Mataveri and Rano Raraku, we visited Orongo more than twenty times with different native escorts, and we were three times on the islet of Motu Nui. The Expedition was over sixteen months on the island.

Easter Island is renowned for its gigantic images, many of which stood on the burial places round the coast and were erected on the slopes of the mountain whence they were hewn, while large numbers still remain in the quarries in an unfinished state. The why and wherefore of these things is lost in mist of antiquity. There is, however, another and less known cult of the island which survived till living memory; it is noteworthy for its own sake, and it is doubly interesting if it can be proved to have had at least some connection with the great statues: this is the Bird Cult.

The population of Easter Island was divided into ten clans or "mata," which are frequently spoken of in two groups, those of Kotuu and those of Hotu-iti, districts which may be simply if roughly identified with the Western and Eastern portions of the island; legend tells of fierce wars between the rival parties. The clan which was in the ascendency at any given time, or the "Mata-toa," had the right to obtain the first egg of a certain migratory sea bird, but two or more clans are often found combining; the members of other clans, or the Mata-kio, might be present in the capacity of servants. The Mata-toa had a claim on the Mata-kio for boat building and food planting and "they were afraid to refuse." How this primary position was originally attained it is not very easy to say, presumably by superior strength; it might be held for one year or for several in succession and was said to be passed on at will to a favoured neighbour. The selection gave rise at times to heartburning: it is told that a man of

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Between these rocks houses have been built of a pattern somewhat different from the others. These were occupied during the great function by the men who recited the tablets. The rocks themselves are covered with a symbol repeated in every size and in every position. It is a figure with the body of a man and the head of a bird. In one or more instances this figure can be traced as holding an egg in its hand. The symbol has been counted 111 times, and many more have obviously weathered away. There is no local tradition; but the inference taken in conjunction with other proofs amounts almost to a certainty that each of these represents the Bird-man of a year.

To return to the newly triumphant victor. Taking the egg in his hand he and his family danced round the coast till they came to Rano Raraku (the Image Mountain). Here the Bird-Man resided in a certain house for twelve months, during five of which he was in a state of strict tabu. The servant also became tabu and was compelled to eat food with his left hand only, the right having touched the sacred egg. The egg itself was suspended in the house of the Bird-Man till the conclusion of the year, when the new victor on his arrival took it out and buried it in a cranny of the mountain. In close proximity to the house of tabu is a roughly made ahu. Here only Bird-Men were allowed to be buried. These men were never exposed, as their corpses were considered uncanny. The bird ceremonies, now no longer held, were continued after the coming of the white men, and even after the custom of living at Orongo had been given up the first egg was still carried 12 miles across the island to the Image Mountain. While there are other possible theories, it seems to be highly probable that the statues on the mountain were the statues of Bird-Men.

The mystery of Easter Island is a puzzle of many pieces. We have, we trust, laid some additional fragments on the table to-night, and we hope in the future to put down all we hold. But others are still lacking to make the pattern clear. A large number of these must be sought outside the island itself. It is essential to know more on the general subject of Polynesian migrations, for it is improbable that either the type of image or the hieroglyphics had their origin on the island, and their earliest history must be discovered. We need to find elsewhere traces of the egg cult ceremony, or of worship of the same bird. In view of the progress yearly being made by ethnological research the general solution of the problem is probably not far distant, but it is tantalizing to realize how all knowledge of the once living detail and weird ceremonial which must have been connected with these gigantic remains is now gone for ever.

We left Easter Island in August 1915 after a total residence of sixteen and a half months. I do not propose to trouble you with the details of our homeward voyage, but you may care to hear something of our next stopping-place, the British Colony of Pitcairn Island. The inhabitants are, as is well known, the descendants of nine mutineers of H.M.S. *Bounty* who sought refuge here in 1791 with nine Tahitian women.

[see 12: Routledge for detailed description--analyst]

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CHAPTER XV

NATIVE CULTURE IN PRE-CHRISTIAN TIMES

Sources of Information: History, Recent Remains, Living Memory—*Mode of Life:* Habitations, Food, Dress and Ornament—*Social Life:* Divisions, Wars, Marriages, Burial Customs, Social Functions.

114 127 It has been seen that any knowledge which exists on the island with regard to the origin of the monuments is of the most vague description, and it is therefore necessary, in the attempt to solve the problem, to rely principally on indirect evidence. It becomes in particular essential to collect all possible information about the present people; not only for its intrinsic anthropological interest, but in order to find if any links connect them with the great builders, or if we must look for an earlier race.

As a first step in the search the scientist naturally turns to the most ancient accounts which he can find describing the island, its inhabitants, and remains; these are not yet two hundred years old. The first European to see it was a Dutch Admiral named Roggeveen, who came upon it on Easter Day, 1722, during his search for another and mysterious island known as Davis or David's Island.[1] He concluded that it was not the place for which he was looking, christened it Easter Island, and went further afield. His ship lay off the north side of the island for a week, but only on one day did landing take place, and one or two of the party have left us short descriptions. [137] 241 There were, they say, no big trees, but it had a rich soil and good climate; there were sugar-cane, bananas, potatoes and figs, and the natives brought them a number of fowls, estimated varyingly from sixty to five hundred.

[1] An island was reported in lat. 27° by an English buccaneer named Davis in 1687. It was, he said, five hundred miles from the coast of Chile, low and sandy, and some twelve leagues to the west of it was seen "a long tract of pretty high land." The description in no way applies to Easter, with which it has sometimes been identified. The probability seems to be that Davis was out of his reckoning, as was by no means unusual in the case of the early mariners, and it has been suggested that the island he saw was Crescent Island, the high ground in the distance being the Gambier group. The latitude of Easter Island is 27° 8′ S., that of Crescent Island is 23° 30′ S.

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For fifty years darkness once more descends on the history of the island. Then, within a period of sixteen years, it was visited by three expeditions, Spanish, English, and French respectively. The Spanish were under the command of Gonzalez.[1] They too were searching for David's Island when, in 1770, they touched at Easter, and they also came to the conclusion that it was not their goal. They took, however, formal possession of it, and named it San Carlos. Their ships lay at anchor in the same place as had those of Roggeveen, the bay on the north coast now called after La Pérouse. From this anchorage three curious hillocks on the northern slope of the great eastern volcano form striking objects (fig. 78); on each of these they planted a cross, and proclaimed the King of Spain with banners flying, beating of drums, and artillery salutes. The natives appear to have thoroughly enjoyed the proceedings, and "confirmed them," according to the solemn statements of the Spaniards, by marking the official document with their own script. This is the first that we hear of a form of native writing. The expedition sent a boat round the island, which made a very creditable map of it.

Four years later Cook cast anchor on the west side in the bay which is known by his name. He was there three days and did not himself explore inland, but his officers did so, including the elder Forster, the botanist of the expedition, and his account of what they saw was published by his son.[2]

In 1780 La Pérouse anchored in the same place, and also sent some of his men inland, who covered partly, but not entirely, the same districts as those of Cook.[3]

As these expeditions were so nearly of the same date, their remarks may fairly be compared and contrasted with those made by Roggeveen half a century earlier. All three give very similar descriptions of the people, their appearance and dwellings, which also resemble the accounts of the Dutch. Cook is very much impressed with the long ears, though La Pérouse does not refer to them. There is the same story of the native powers of ap-

[1] *Voyage of Gonsales*, p. 27 *seq.*

[2] *A Voyage Towards the South Pole and Round the World*, by James Cook, 1st ed., 4to, 1777, pp. 276–96.
A Voyage Round the World, George Forster, 4to, 1777. Vol. i., pp. 551–602.

[3] *Voyage de La Pérouse autour du Monde*. 4to edn., London, 1799. Vol. i., pp. 319–36.

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demolition has gone so far that Beechey declares "the existence of any busts is doubtful."[1] It is amusing to find, a hundred years after Roggeveen's similar experience, that the *Blossom* has an affray with natives over the stealing of caps. While attention has been drawn to the importance of these early narratives, it must be remembered that all the visits were of very short duration, and that the old voyagers were not trained observers. The Dutchmen, for instance, deliberately tell us that the statues have no arms. The accounts frequently give the impression of being written up afterwards from somewhat vague recollection, and in most cases the narrators have read those of their predecessors and go prepared to see certain things. One navigator who never landed assures us that the houses are the same as in the days of La Pérouse. On the other hand, with regard to the stores available, they are, so to speak, on their own quarter-deck, and their remarks can be accepted without question.

In the "sixties" of last century the great series of changes took place which brought Easter Island into touch with the modern world. The first of these largely broke those chains with the past which the archæologist now seeks to reconstruct. Labour was needed by the exploiters of the Peruvian guano fields, and an attempt which was made to introduce it from China having failed, slave-raids were organised in the South Sea Islands. As early as 1805 Easter had suffered similarly at the hands of American sealers, and it was amongst the principal islands to be laid under contribution in December 1862.

It is pathetic even now to hear the old men describe the scenes which they witnessed in their youth, illustrating by action how the raiders threw down on the ground gifts which they thought likely to attract the inhabitants, and, when the islanders were on their knees scrambling for them, tied their hands behind their backs and carried them off to the waiting ship. The natives say that one thousand in all were so removed from the island, and, unfortunately, there were amongst them some of the principal men, including many of the most learned, and the last of the ariki, or chiefs. Representations were made by the French Minister at Lima, and a certain number were put on board ship to be returned to their home. Smallpox, however, had been contracted by them, and out of one hundred who were

[1] *Voyage to the Pacific, H.M.S. "Blossom,"* p. 41.

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The ravages of this disease, following on those of smallpox, reduced the population, which at the time of the arrival of the mission had stood at twelve hundred, by about one-fourth.

The remarks of the missionaries on native customs, particularly those dealing with their ceremonies, reflect credit on the observers at a time when such things were too often thought beneath notice; they will be referred to later. Their ethnological work was, however, limited by more pressing exigencies, by the difficulties of locomotion on the island, and by the language. Roussel compiled a vocabulary, which is useful to students, though not free from the mode of thought found in a well-known missionary dictionary, which translates hansom cab into the Swahili language. It is a curious fact that so completely were the terraces now ruined that the Fathers never allude to the statues, and seem scarcely to have realised their existence; but it is through them that we first hear of the wooden tablets carved with figures. The body of professors acquainted with this art of writing perished, either in Peru or by epidemic, and this, in connection with the introduction of Christianity, led to great destruction of the existing specimens of this most interesting script. The natives said that they burnt the tablets in compliance with the orders of the missionaries, though such suggestion would hardly be needed in a country where wood is scarce; the Fathers, on the contrary, state that it was due to them that any were preserved. Some certainly were saved by their means and through the interest shown in them by Bishop Jaussen of Tahiti, while two or three found their way to museums after the natives became aware of their value; but some or all of these existing tablets are merely fragments of the original. The natives told us that an expert living on the south coast, whose house had been full of such glyphs, abandoned them at the call of the missionaries, on which a man named Niari, being of a practical mind, got hold of the discarded tablets and made a boat of them wherein he caught much fish. When the "sewing came out," he stowed the wood into a cave at an ahu near Hanga Roa, to be made later into a new vessel there. Pakarati, an islander now living, found a piece, and it was acquired by the U.S.A. ship *Mohican*.

Side by side with the establishment of the religious power the secular had come into being. The master of the ship who had

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brought the last two missionaries was a certain Captain Dutrou Bornier. He had been attracted by the place, and, having made financial arrangements with the mercantile house of Brander in Tahiti, settled himself on the island and proceeded to exploit it commercially. Title-deeds were obtained from the natives in exchange for gifts of woven material. The remaining population was gathered together into one settlement at Hanga Roa, the native name for the shore of Cook's Bay. This was the state of things when H.M.S. *Topaze* touched in 1868 and carried off the two statues now at the British Museum.

Dutrou Bornier had at first spoken enthusiastically of the work of the missionaries; later, however, the not unknown struggle arose between the religious and secular powers. According to the accounts of the missionaries, they protested against the actions of Bornier in taking over two hundred natives, practically by force, and shipping them to Tahiti to work on the Brander plantations. Bornier retaliated by rendering their position impossible, and the Fathers ultimately received orders to transfer their labours to the Gambier islands. Jaussen tells us that their converts desired to accompany them, and that almost the whole population went on board with them. The captain, however, instigated by Bornier, refused to carry so many, and one hundred and seventy-five were sent back to the shore. This, therefore, "was the whole population" in 1871. We have not Bornier's account of the quarrel, but there seems to have been some justification for the attitude of the missionaries towards him, as five years later he was murdered by the natives, and, if current stories are to be believed, his end was well merited.

Subsequently one of the Branders lived at Mataveri, and Mr. Alexander Salmon, to whom the missionaries sold their interests, at Vaihu on the south coast.[1] The Salmon family had intermarried with the royal family of Tahiti, and the new resident was well aware of the value of antiquities. According to native accounts he organised a band to search the caves and hiding-places for articles of interest. They also state that he employed skilled natives to produce wooden objects connected with their older culture for sale to passing ships. He spoke the

[1] The above statement is made on the authority of Mr. John Brander of Tahiti. According to report of H.M.S. *Sappho*, which visited the island in 1882, Salmon was then an agent of the Maison Brander.

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language of the island, and when the U.S.S. *Mohican* arrived in 1886, he was the source of much of the information which they subsequently published. It is an important but difficult matter to know how far the material thus gleaned thirty years ago was carefully obtained and reproduced. One or two of the folk-tales are still told very much as retailed by Salmon, but he appears to have taken little interest in the surviving customs and failed to understand them. The report of the *Mohican*, made by Paymaster Thomson, has been the only account of the island in existence with any pretention to scientific value.[1] The *Mohican* was there eleven days, and Thomson went rapidly round the island with a party from the ship. The amount of ground covered and work done is remarkable, although his statements are naturally not free from the errors inseparable from such rapid observation.

In 1888 the Chilean Government formally took possession. In 1897 M. Merlet, of Valparaiso, purchased from the representatives of Brander, Bornier, and Salmon, their interest in Easter Island, with the exception of a tract of land containing the village of Hanga Roa, which the Chilean Government acquired from the missionaries and retained in the interest of the inhabitants; this land covers a far larger space than the natives are able to utilise. The population is again increasing, as will have been seen from the fact that during our visit they numbered two hundred and fifty. M. Merlet subsequently sold his holding to a company, of which he became chairman.

Easter Island has had many names. That given by the Dutchman has become generally accepted, but the Spaniards christened it San Carlos, and in some maps it is termed "Waihu," a name of a part of the island erroneously understood as applying to the whole. A native name is Te Pito-te-henua, "*henua*" means usually "earth" and "*pito*" "navel."[2] Thomson says it was ascribed to the first comers. Elsewhere in the Pacific "*pito*" also means "end." Churchill holds the name signified simply "Land's End," and was applied to all these angles of the island, which was itself without a name.[3] Rapa-nui (or Great Rapa) is another native name for which various explanations are offered.

[1] *Smithsonian Report*, 1889.

[2] In the *Odyssey* Athene speaks of Odysseus as "in a sea-girt isle, where is the navel of the sea." (*Odyssey*, Bk. I., l. 50, Butcher & Lang.)

[3] *Easter Island. The Rapa-nui Speech*. W. Churchill, p. 3.

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101 The island of Rapa, sometimes known as Rapa-iti, lies some two thousand miles to the westward. Thomson states that the name Rapa-nui only dates from the time when the men kidnapped by the Peruvians were being returned to their homes. The Easter Islanders, finding no one knew the name Te Pito-te-henua, and that some comrades in distress from the other Rapa managed to make their place of origin understood, called their own home Rapa-nui; a story which sounds hardly probable, but was presumably obtained from Salmon.

According to the report of H.M.S. *Topaze*, the Islanders of their day believed that Rapa was their original home. Others state the name was given by a visitor from that island.

● 114 The brief accounts which have been referred to are all that is known from external evidence of the original life of the present people, and but little hope was held out to us in England that those fragments could still be supplemented. There were found, however, to be still in existence two possible sources of information, namely, the memories of old inhabitants, and the actual traces which still remain of the life led by the people previous to the Peruvian raid and the coming of Christianity. The great ahu which have so far been described are only a part, although the most imposing portion, of the stone remains of the island. It is fortunate for the student that when civilisation appeared the natives were gathered into one settlement, for they left behind them, sprinkled over the island, various erections connected with their original domestic life. These buildings were certainly being used in recent times, and are treated from this point of view, but for all we know they may have been, and very possibly were, contemporary with the great works.

The study of the remains on the island, from the greatest to the least, is by no means so simple as may hitherto have appeared. Our earliest attempts at descriptions, although conscientious, were almost ludicrous in the light of subsequent knowledge, and Captain Beechey's error on the subject of " the busts " is at least comprehensible. Easter, it must be remembered, is a mass of disintegrating rocks. When in an idle moment the Expedition amused itself by inventing an heraldic design for the island, it was universally agreed that the main emblem must undoubtedly be a " stone," " and as supporters," suggested one frivolous member, " two cockroaches rampant." The most

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correct representation would be a stone vertical on a stone horisontal. Every individual who has lived, even temporarily, in the place, has collected stones and put them up according to taste; and every succeeding generation, also needing stones, has, as in the instance of the manager's wall, found them most readily in ruining or converting the work of their predecessors. Even when a building is comparatively intact, the original design and purpose can only be grasped by experience, and matters become distinctly complicated when the walls of an ahu have been made into a garden enclosure and a chicken-house turned into an ossuary. It must be remembered also that rough stone buildings bear in themselves no marks of age. The cairns put up by us to mark the distances for rifle fire from the camp were indistinguishable from those of prehistoric nature made for a very different purpose. The result is that the tumble-down remains of yesterday, and the scenes of unknown antiquity blend together in a confusing whole in which it is not always easy to distinguish even the works of nature from those of man.

The other source of information which was open to us was the memory of the old people. If but little was known of the great works, it was possible that there might still linger knowledge of customs or folk-lore which would throw indirect light on origins. This field proved to be astonishingly large, but it was even more difficult to collect facts from brains than out of stones. On our arrival there were still a few old people who were sufficiently grown up in the sixties to recall something of the old life; with the great majority of these, about a dozen in number, we gradually got in touch, beginning with those who worked for Mr. Edmunds and hearing from them of others. It was momentous work, for the eleventh hour was striking, day by day they were dropping off; it was a matter of anxious consideration whose testimony should first be recorded for fear that, meanwhile, others should be gathered to their fathers, and their store of knowledge lost for ever. Against the longer recollection of extreme old age, had to be put the fact that the memories of those a little younger were generally more clear and accurate. The feeling of responsibility from a scientific point of view was very great. Ten years ago more could have been done; ten years hence little or nothing will remain of this source of knowledge.

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any doubt being thrown on his story, which would at once have given offence; then allowed to forget and again re-examined, his story being compared with that of others who had been heard meanwhile. Counsel had also to be judge and to act as reporter, and at the same time keep the witness amused and prevent the interpreter from being bored, or the court would promptly have broken up. Though great care has been exercised, it must be remembered, when a particular account is quoted, as, for example, that of Te Haha regarding the annual inspection of the tablets, while it is believed to rest on fact, its absolute accuracy cannot be guaranteed. 124

The language question naturally added to the difficulty. On landing two courses had been open, either to go on with Spanish, of which the younger men had a certain knowledge, and which was used by Mr. Edmunds, or to try to get some hold of the native tongue. The latter plan was decided on, and though at one time the difficulties seemed so great that this course was almost regretted, in the end it was vindicated. There is, as stated, a vocabulary in French made by the missionaries, and also one in Spanish, but there is no grammar of any kind. The French carpenter, Varta, was some assistance, particularly at the beginning. The first steps were the easiest. The Kanakas were much interested in my endeavours, and rushed round wildly, bringing any object they could lay hands on in order to teach its name; but even with the nouns an unexpected complication arose. The natives speak, not only their own language, but, side by side with it, that of Tahiti, which is used in their religious books and services; there are affinities between the two, but they are quite dissimilar, and to understand conversation it was necessary to learn both. This very much prolonged the task, and also lessened the results obtained. [114] [191]

The next stage, the putting together of sentences, was still more difficult. How was it possible to talk in a language which had no verb "to be"? I had, it is true, a native maid (fig. 29), but, after the simplest phrases had been learnt, topics for conversation were difficult to find. We looked through illustrated magazines together, but wild beasts, railway trains, and the greater part of the pictures of all kinds, conveyed nothing to her. The plan was therefore hit on of a tale, after the manner of the *Arabian Nights*, dealing with imaginary

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on his death to Maurata. When Maurata went to Peru, Také, a relative of Te Haha, obtained them, and Salmon asked Te Haha to get hold of them for him. Také, however, unfortunately owed Te Haha a grudge, because when Te Haha was in Salmon's service, and consequently well off, he did not give him as many presents as his relative thought should have been forthcoming, and he consequently refused to surrender them. They were hidden in a cave whose general locality was surmised, but Také died without making known the exact site, and they could never be found. Kaimokoi's tablets were burnt in war.

The question remains what were the subjects with which the tablets dealt, and in what manner did they record them? Various attempts have been made to deal with a problem which will probably never be wholly solved. Twice before our own day native assistance has been sought to decipher them. It will be remembered that the existence of these glyphs was first reported by the missionaries; but even at that time, when volunteers were asked for who could translate them, none came forward, Bishop Jaussen, Vicaire Apostolique of Tahiti, managed to find in that island a native of Easter among those brought there to work on the Brander plantations, who was supposed to understand them, and who read them after the boustrophedon method. From the information given by him, the Bishop was satisfied that the signs represented different things, such as sun, stars, the ariki, and so forth, and has given a list of the figures and their equivalent. At the same time he held that each one was only a peg on which to hang much longer matter which was committed to memory. The other attempt to obtain a translation was that of Paymaster Thomson, of U.S.S. *Mohican*, in 1886. There was then living an old man, Ure-vae-iko by name, who was said to be the last to understand the form of writing; he declined to assist in deciphering them on the ground that his religious teachers had said it would imperil his soul. Photographs, however, were shown, and, by the aid of stimulants, he was induced to give a version of their meaning, the words of which were taken down by Salmon. It was, however, remarked that when the photographs were changed, the words proceeded just the same.

Inquiries were made by the Expedition about this old man, and it was agreed by the islanders that he had never possessed

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212 any tablets nor could he make them, but that he had been a servant of Ngaara and had learnt to repeat them. Before leaving the island we went with the old men through the five translations given by Thomson. Of three nothing was known; one which describes the process of creation was recognised as that of a kohau, but looked at a little askance, as there were Tahitian words in it. The last was laughed out of court as being merely a love-song which everyone knew.

Our own early experiences had resembled those of the Americans. Photographs of tablets, which were produced merely to elicit general information, were to our surprise promptly read, certain words being assigned to each figure; but after a great deal of trouble had been taken, in drawing the signs and writing down the particular matter, it was found that any figure did equally well. The natives were like children pretending to read and only reciting. It was noted, however, with interest, that in perhaps half a dozen cases different persons recited words approximately the same, beginning, "He timo te ako-ako, he ako-ako tena," and on inquiry it was said that they were derived from one of the earliest tablets and were generally known. It was "like the alphabet learned first"; Ure-vai-iko had stated that they were the "great old words," all others being only "little ones." To get any sort of translation was a difficult matter, to ask for it was much the same as for a stranger solemnly to inquire the meaning of some of our own old nursery rhymes, such as "Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle"—some words could be explained, others could not, the whole meaning was unknown. It seems safe, however, to assume that at least we have here the contents of one of the old tablets.

212 With regard to other kohau, a list was obtained of the subjects with which they were believed to deal. These amounted to thirteen in all, most of the names being given by several different persons. We have seen that there was a kohau of the "Ika," the murdered men; this was known to only one professor, who taught it to a pupil, and the two divided the island between them, the master taking the west and north coast to Anakena and the pupil the remainder. A connected, or possibly the same, tablet was made at the instance of the relatives of the victim and helped to secure vengeance. Certain kohau were said to be lists of wars; some dealt with ceremonies, and others